

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. LIBRARY



3 9424 05118 436 1

STORAGE-ITEM
FINE ARTS

LP5-N29A
U.B.C. LIBRARY

181

THE LIBRARY



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

THE LIBRARY

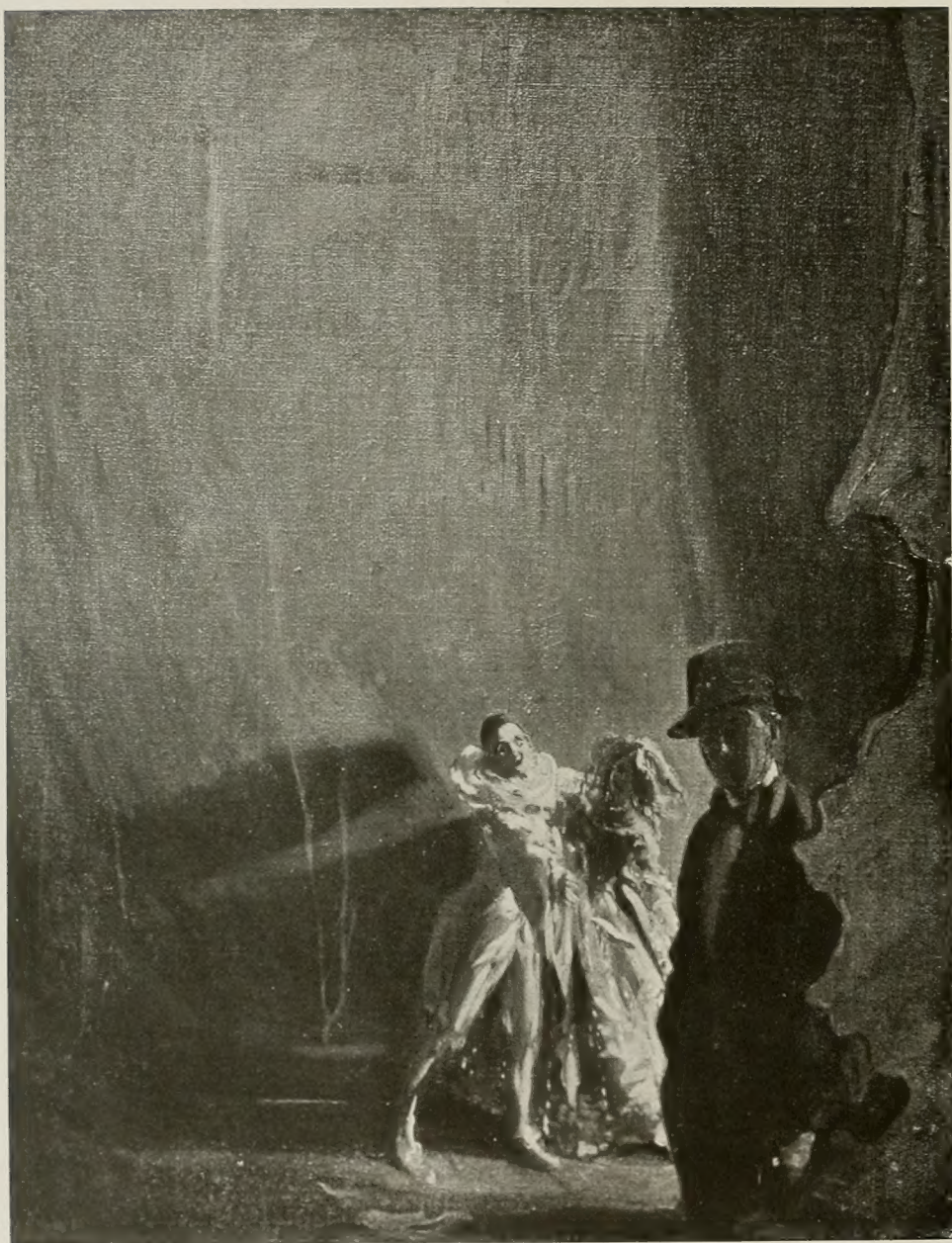


THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Some of the Moderns



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of British Columbia Library



BEHIND THE SCENES
By William Nicholson.

SOME OF THE MODERNS

By

FREDERICK WEDMORE

WITH EIGHTY ILLUSTRATIONS

"Les artistes sont des exceptions"

LONDON

VIRTUE & CO.,

7 CITY GARDEN ROW, CITY ROAD

1909

*There are, in all, but Seven Hundred
and Fifty copies, of which Seven
Hundred are for sale.*

PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE for some time doubted whether it was at all desirable there should be any Preface to this book, large parts of which have been passed recently through The Art Journal. The title defines its character, and indicates its aim. "While in doubt, do nothing," is an excellent maxim, which I first heard from a great man of affairs, who had doubted little, had done much, and whose successes were colossal. I laid to heart his observation—and this book, now offered to the reader, shall have an introduction but in name.

All that really needs to be said is that it is a study of certain interesting individualities in our contemporary Art: men, most of them still more or less young, and, with but two or three exceptions, still not popular; the large world being as yet not ready to receive them, though all have been received, by this time, by at the least an appreciable portion of that alert, small public which makes the reputations of To-morrow.

In order to know whom to admit, whom to exclude—though, indeed, some of my exclusions are involuntary, in the sense that they were forced upon me by the need for narrowing my choice, or Cayley Robinson and Hughes Stanton would have been here (to name two out of several lights not fully risen)—I asked only, in presence of

each talent, "Is it thoroughly personal?" I did not ask, "Is it correct? Is it well-trained? Is it the dexterous follower of a school?" Already now—yet more, I am certain, in the near Future—the times must be too busy to take account, in Literature and Painting, of school and well-trained follower. It is only the original and the important with which we shall consent to be occupied; and, denying to mere eccentricity the place it would assert for itself, and finding in abounding mediocrity—masses of mediocrity that has mistaken its vocation—no claim to be considered at all, our attention will be concentrated on masters of the Past, and on those men who in this generation utter with reasonableness and with wisdom their own new note.

F. W.

LONDON, October 1909.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
WILLIAM NICHOLSON	3
THÉODORE ROUSSEL	13
P. WILSON STEER	25
BERTRAM PRIESTMAN	33
WALTER SICKERT	43
DAVID MUIRHEAD	53
HORACE MANN LIVENS	63
PHILIP CONNARD	75
MUIRHEAD BONE	87
WILLIAM ORPEN	97

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WILLIAM NICHOLSON

Behind the Scenes (*Frontispiece*)
A Café at Dieppe
Anthony Bacon
Jingle
Blenheim Park
Place du Petit Enfer
Miss Marie Tempest
Francis and Christopher Bacon
Hampstead Heath: Flagstaff
The Earl of Plymouth and his Family
Nancy
Still Life
Carlina

THÉODORE ROUSSEL

The Reading Girl
Chelsea Palaces (*Etching*)
Mlle. Roussel
A Sheffield Jug
Nude Figure reclining (*Lithograph*)
La Nuit; Septembre: Chelsea
Dr Bilderbeck Gomez
Le Miroir
Grave Evening
Model Mending her Drapery

P. WILSON STEER

The Cotswold Hills

The Looking-glass

The Japanese Gown

A Courtyard

Corfe Castle

Poole Harbour

BERTRAM PRIESTMAN

Cement Works

A Mile from the Town

The Meadow Stream

Storm at Dover

Valley Pastures

The Church on the Hill

WALTER SICKERT

Old Hôtel Royal, Dieppe (*Drawing*)

"Sam Collins"

Mrs George Swinton

"The Middlesex" (*Etching*)

Fondamenta del Malcanton

Camden Town: Interior

DAVID MUIRHEAD

The Letter

The Harbour, Stonehaven

The Ouse near Huntingdon

A Woodland Pool

The Wooden Bridge

Church in the Fens

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xi

HORACE MANN LIVENS

Wyandotte Cock and Hen
The Tarred Fence: Winter (*Water Colour*)
Richmond Bridge: Twilight (*Water Colour*)
The White Vase
Crescent Hotel, Brighton
Brighton: October Day (*Water Colour*)
Folkestone: Collier Unloading (*Water Colour*)
The Fruit Boat, Folkestone
"The Berkeley" (*Water Colour*)

PHILIP CONNARD

Landscape near Eccles, Norfolk
The Bathers
Vauxhall
Preparing for the Walk
A Lady with a Shawl
A Woman Seated
On the Ramparts

MUIRHEAD BONE

The Great Gantry: Charing Cross Station, 1906 (*Drawing*)
Rathbone Place (*Drawing*)
Seaford (*Drawing*)
The Sardinian Embassy (*Drawing*)
Lansdowne House Garden (*Drawing*)
Clare Market (*Dry Point*)
Leeds Warehouses (*Dry Point*)
The Strand (*Dry Point*)
South Coast (*Dry Point*)
Liberty's Clock (*Dry Point*)
Building (*Dry Point*)

WILLIAM ORPEN

A Mere Fracture

Grace Orpen

A Portrait Group

The Hon. Percy Wyndham

Recumbent Figure

The Dead Ptarmigan

William Nicholson

WILLIAM NICHOLSON

As it was a note of the Renaissance painter to be concerned with many arts, so it is a note of our painter to-day to be concerned with many themes. The modernness of William Nicholson—like the modernness of Wilson Steer, of Orpen, or of Connard—is shown in nothing more than in this: that he declines to be a narrow specialist: that he demands a fresh impression: that he will not repeat a subject (no, not even a *genre*) until it again calls out, as it were, for treatment; that is, until it appeals to him with freshness.

This range—a range instinctive, and at the same time deliberate—is likely always to delay the acceptance of our painter's production by the conventionally - minded dealer and the conventionally-minded Public. The Public, naturally, detects or identifies subject and sentiment much more promptly than it detects or identifies a painter's *technique*. "That is a Brett," it likes to be able to say, in a moment, from the other side of the room: "that is a Marcus Stone; that is a Henry Moore." Less than thirty years ago, unless an artist was in the first flight absolutely—and had the courage to be alone—a specialist

he was bound to be. In our art of Literature, the same thing happens in a measure—happens even to-day. You must be labelled “critic,” or you must be labelled “novelist,” or labelled “writer of memoirs.” Nay, that is not definite enough by any means ; if you write stories, you must confine yourself within the limits of “the sketcher of the slums,” provided it was the slums that started you—and, if your reputation is established for pessimism, beware of wandering into cheerfulness or humour. Of course, the best men and the greater natures refuse these chains, often—but a price has to be paid for refusing them.

Not quite to the same extent as would be the case even now, were Nicholson writer instead of painter and draughtsman, is his recognition retarded by the range of his endeavour ; but still, it is retarded—it is more limited than it would otherwise be. Some recognition was given to him early. He made a “hit” — that so individual talent, for which the word genius is not, that I know of, too strong, did happen quickly to deliver itself of things that struck the world. Would he repeat those things ? Not indefinitely, by any means. With other things now, he has had as brilliant successes, and has won, perhaps, a place more lasting. But the interval ! It has to be remembered.

Nicholson has been thought of, not seldom, as the

painter of what he sees. And his, undoubtedly, is a dead certainty of vision and of record—the canvas often apparently fulfilling the service of those tables for which Hamlet called—

“My tables,—meet it is I set it down.”

But that is a very partial account of the matter, after all; for while, on Nicholson, the hold of Reality is great, the grip severe and unrelaxed, it is oftenest the hold of a reality that has been carefully selected; the “first comer” of the common objects, common scenes, or common or uncommon people, must not hope to interest Nicholson; and although to be “uncommon” is certainly to have a favourable introduction to him, even that must not be counted upon surely. In truth, Nicholson is not at all without imagination, without marked preference, or without romance. His seeming grip upon reality is itself partly imaginative—Romantic Realism, and not the realism of the reporter, is the thing of which he is in quest.

Even his early, very popular works, unsurpassed in their own fashion—the Portraits, and the Almanac of Twelve Sports—indicate this. The Oxford drawings, with all their unquestioning acceptance of the thing that is—of the conditions under which the Mediævalism and the late English Classicism of the University town exists to-day and is beheld—owe a great deal of their strength to the imaginative

understanding of the Past. And I should like to know whether, in the Portraits, imaginative understanding—supported, of course, by a *technique* expressive and potent, economical, sometimes very purposely rough—is not at the root of such a triumph of character-drawing as that vision of the Great Queen in isolation august and pathetic? The aspects—sometimes the superficial aspects—of much that is in Nature, and in human *entourage*, appeal to Nicholson, as a painter: this and that given line, these colours, these combinations of colour, and this keen light, and this mysterious shadow—but mere skill of handiwork, recording observation of externals, is not to be credited with the achievements that are already his. His own nature at least, whilst alert, can never have been superficial. Behind his appreciation of comedy and energetic character, and of character sometimes eccentric, lies a sense, a deep sense, of “the tears of things.”

Still, it is difficult—and with one's appreciation of the fact of his range, can it really be necessary?—to formulate theories as to the direction to be taken hereafter in the strenuous journey of his art. I will give my impression. I think Still-life, manly and subtle as is Nicholson's treatment of it, will in the main be an important accessory. And though I keenly enjoy, and set great store by, the absolute individuality of those visions of Landscape, and the land-

scape of towns, which come to him when he shuts his studio door from the outside, and wanders on Hampstead Heath, or on wide Downs behind Brighton, or in the quaint streets of Eighteenth-Century Dieppe—visions of Landscape which he sets down with Style, with mellow perfectness quickly attained, yet in whose stern economy of means there is no thought of the exclusion of his own creative, intensifying touch—still it is not to Landscape, one is permitted to surmise, that he will give the best of his Future; for Humanity, in one way or another, is his deepest interest, and every figure in his great, little landscape-pictures is still “a person of the drama,” and so lives with an intensity that is foreign absolutely to the pure landscape painter’s figures. Important always, in the record of Nicholson’s Art, will be what he has now done in that order of landscape which most vividly appeals to him—a landscape so appropriately peopled—and important, doubtless, that which he may yet produce in obedience to the occasional summons. But now to different branches of his work.

Of every other edifice that Nicholson’s art erects, Humanity is yet more visibly the keystone. There is the treatment of the Nude, to which, as the “Carlina” of this year’s New English Art Club—that figure of a suave, delightful grace—reminds us, he has recently turned. What more will the Nude yield him, from the point of view from

which it is clear that he regards it—the attainment he aims at being no studio study of the naked, but an expression of something that is not far from the ideal in line? I may not speak with authority, but I must at least persuade myself that the selection of the flat and uniform, rather dull light which allowed to the pose and the contour their fullest importance, and favoured, if not actually compelled, the exclusion of the detailed study of surfaces and texture in the flesh, was not an accident in “Carlina.” Deliberately, I should say, was the aim—as was certainly its achievement—different at every point, in this “Carlina” picture, from what was Mr Orpen’s in a now famous Nude that in its own style I as cordially admire. Orpen threw away elegance, cherished vitality, and followed Rembrandt. Nicholson, eschewing, for the nonce, quick action, energy—and with them those revelations of the figure in its inmost life which quick action vouchsafes—maintained reserve, gloried in reticence, as Ingres in his “Odalisque.”

Then there is Portraiture. That has exercised Nicholson—and Nicholson has exercised Portraiture—these several years. In his portraiture of the mature, he reads below the surface; and, with a broad directness of statement, much it is that he tells you that it required, not an observer of surfaces only, but something of a psychologist, to discern. Do I imply then that Nicholson does not read

below the surface when he is painting the young? Not in the least, except just in so much as that the very young hide nothing—veil no dislike, conceal no desire—and a part of the charm of little people, in their earliest years, is that it is upon the surface, though at such different hours, that the whole of them lies—spontaneous their gaiety: their gravity or disapproval unconcerned with concealment—their faces and their gestures spread out before us, for our reading of their characters, a clean, clear map.

And yet, of that map, how marvellously few painters have, as it seems to me, taken advantage! The really great painters of children can be counted on the fingers. I hope I am not asked to reckon Sir Joshua among them. Romney might press into the little group—he has more right than most men; and I should leave it to him to discreetly retire when he found of whom the company consisted. It seems to me there are but five whose place therein, in an extended Past, is wholly incontestable—Jan Steen, Velazquez, Watteau, Chardin, Whistler. But several things, and most of all of them the portrait-group of the two younger children of Mr T. W. Bacon—assuredly the most admirable picture of childhood that our generation has known—portend the advent of Nicholson, and justify his right of entry, and make probable his lasting stay.

And last, perhaps, there is Dramatic Genre, on the lighter side of which the painter of these distinguished little landscapes, of this weird vision of a town ("La Place du Petit Enfer," which was but lately shown by Mr Marchant), of this suave nudity ("Carlina"), of this thought-laden man (Lord Plymouth), of these joyous and confident children, has, in the picture of the "wings" of the theatre ("Behind the Scenes"), already gone far. That, in its suggestiveness, is intense. And yet Dramatic Genre may hold for William Nicholson a something that it has not given, and it would not surprise me at all if one of the as yet unaccomplished stages of the journey of his art were marked by the seizing it. For, if I take stock of him aright, the uneventful hour does not, at bottom, appeal to him as much—nearly as much—as "passionate extremes," and there is no reason to suppose him wanting in that electric force with which some untouched theme may be thrilled.



A CAFE AT DIEPPE
By William Nicholson.
*In the possession of
Robert Bayly, Esq.*



ANTHONY BACON
By William Nicholson.
In the possession of
T. W. Bacon, Esq.



JINGLE

By William Nicholson.

*By permission of
The Stafford Gallery.*



BLENHEIM PARK
By William Nicholson.
In the possession of
W. C. Alexander, Esq.



PLACE DU PETIT CHÊNE
By William Nicholson.
In the possession of
T. W. Bacon, Esq.



MISS MARIE TEMPEST
By William Nicholson.
*By permission of
The Stafford Gallery.*



FRANCIS AND CHRISTOPHER BACON

By William Nicholson.

*In the possession of
T. W. Bacon, Esq.*



HAMPSTEAD HEATH: FLAGSTAFF
By William Nicholson.



THE EARL OF PLYMOUTH AND HIS FAMILY

By William Nicholson.

In the possession of The Right Hon.

The Earl of Plymouth.



NANCY
By William Nicholson.
In the possession of
J. R. Findlay, Esq.



STILL LIFE
By William Nicholson.



CARLINA
By William Nicholson.

Théodore Roussel

THÉODORE ROUSSEL

OF the Seven—no six—Ages of Man, as they were once described to me by a Frenchman whose conversation I relish—"un jeune homme," "un homme jeune," "un homme encore jeune," "un homme dans toute la force de l'âge," "un monsieur d'un certain âge," and, finally, "un vieillard"—Roussel has lived long enough to have got into the fourth stage—and could any stage be happier? He would not have got into the fourth, however, and not be more widely known by the general public than he is now, but for two things.

One of them is, that Roussel is endowed abnormally with the genius for taking pains. He does not of course make the mistake of over-labouring his canvases and coppers—of visibly insisting upon the amount of detail he has been enabled to observe and to chronicle. No, no—he remains broad. Such a mistake as an elaboration appealing to the Public would be remunerative—and he has avoided it. His pains are spent in private. In the secrecy of his studio, from which he so seldom emerges—his studio, where he loves everything—from the quiet brown background, or the

"*chevalet* piece" he stands in front of, to the printing press in the corner, and from the flowers on the writing table to the Sheffield plate upon the shelves—in the secrecy of that ample chamber, where associations as well as performances recall to him, and to those who are interested in his work, so much of his life, he has employed himself with technical experiments of every kind—has brought the *technique* of his particular crafts, and more particularly the *technique* of his craft of etching, to perfection—has thought, reflected, painted, drawn, etched, made dry-points, *vernīs mou*, printed in colours. What endless preparations, made untiringly for tasks some of them only yet, as it were, begun—some of them—thank Heaven!—admirably accomplished.

The second thing—and of itself it goes some way in explanation of the first—is Roussel's ineradicable instinct to appeal to those who, in their being and their apprehension are, like himself, essentially aristocratic. His audience—*coûte que coûte*—must be the capable few, and never the unqualified many. A shade of melancholy would steal over Roussel's face, and he would earnestly distrust himself—I see, in imagination, the "searchings" of his heart—if an ill - advised friend approached him with the most dubious of all compliments, and told him he was "popular." "Popular," in a world consisting of "artists"—artists, that is, in performance or feeling—a world consisting of "artists

and others"; his own definition; and chiefly of "others," I fear. "Not popular, but a favourite!" Whistler once said to me of himself with glee, upon the Bond Street pavement — watching who were the people passing into his show. And I can conceive Roussel sending up this prayer to Heaven—"Not popular, but perhaps some day a Classic!"

And thus it is that the vast, superficial Public—caught most, in every art, by the garish and the violent, and understanding readily only the shallow—has not yet received at all generally the intimation of the place assigned to Roussel by those qualified folk to whom an individuality profoundly and exclusively artistic has been permitted to appeal.

A Frenchman, owing something of his personal qualities as ancestors on this side and on that have been responsible for them, to the Île de France, with its suavity, and to the South (Dauphiné or Provence) with its inextinguishable ardour—Roussel is by long residence and by affection for this land, particularly this London, almost an Englishman. He came here very young, some thirty years ago—established himself at Chelsea—and to whose but Whistler's influence could he in that day have gravitated? He was, in a sense, Whistler's pupil, and it was not long before he became, in a real measure, Whistler's friend—a friend often agreeing

with the utterances and conduct, but likewise privileged and certain, on not a few occasions, to disagree with the utterances and conduct, of the Chief. Some later associates, more prudent—it may be, more self-interested—would have applied in vain for that privilege.

Of a familiarity with Chelsea—the Chelsea of the 'Eighties — great even as Whistler's own, or as Paul Maitland's, whom we have lately regretted, more than one beautiful painting and many alert, expressive, curiously elegant etchings bear evidence. Notable amongst the pictures is Lord Grimthorpe's "La Nuit: Septembre: Chelsea."

This Nocturne is of clear, impeccable moonlight. "La rive et son architecture sont une masse d'ombre dont le contour se dessine sur la lumière. Les toits des maisons et des usines reflètent par morceaux la lumière." The leafage of the plane tree in the foreground "est d'une couleur vague de bronze." It will be observed that I have set myself upon obtaining the description of the picture—not a word of its eulogy—from the artist himself. "Le feuillage du platane jette une dentelle sur la partie la plus claire du tableau. Et la lune est vue à travers le feuillage."

And the etchings or dry points of this Chelsea time—executed, I expect, before Roussel's removal to the not remote old Georgian house, a mile or two to the

west — include what I suppose to be the quite obvious masterpiece of “Cheyne Walk,” and a masterpiece not in the least less unquestioned, though demanding perhaps more of the expert’s knowledge to properly enjoy it: “Chelsea Palaces”—that little, great record of old Lindsay Row, or Lindsay Houses, in massive shadow and in blinding light. What an arrangement! And what a realisation — poetic because ennobling. A piece perfectly put together. The truth seen finely.

And since I am upon the Etchings—etchings proper, dry-points, and *vernis mou* — let there be mentioned not only the absolutely recent success — a dry-point in the broadest manner — “Snow in my Front Garden”; the aspect of the trees and railings that divide the garden from the public Green, the aspect that they bore with all the clogging, weighty snow of a cruel morning; but also the earlier, not less excellent, but less unique successes of the simple little dry-point “Head of a Girl,” and of that etching known as “Chelsea Regatta,” in which, apart from the vitality of the whole, the thing of most particular interest is the group of youthful Londoners eager as to the sight. Then, again, the little upright print, “Penelope, Chelsea” — the quiet, working figure, blonde of hue and delicate of contour against the darkly shadowed doorway, approached by steps and short protecting railing from

some certainly humble street. And then—executed not so very long before the snow scene I have spoken of—"The Terrace, Monte Carlo," its space and Southern sunniness, and the outstretched, placid bay; and, expressed so pointedly, the figures lounging or passing on the Terrace: the idle man certain to be responsive to the strange lady, whose attitude is a mute appeal. "Prêtez-moi un louis!" she seems to say—for the Casino and the "tables" are near. Lastly, there are two or three plates in which the needle and the acid of Roussel, charged with a message from Anacreon or Ovid, have bitten into copper, tiny as, or tinier than, the very smallest touched, four hundred years ago, by the *burin* of the Behams, Aldegrever, Pencz, or Jacob Binck.

And now, again, the pictures—as to which I think it my first duty to speak of a high masterpiece, "The Reading Girl," so that, if possible, that canvas, austere in its performance, restful in its effect, may not leave England, and in England may soon find lasting home in nothing but a public place. Among the great, dignified treatments of the Nude in modern days, among a few pieces undoubtedly maturing for Classic rank, "The Reading Girl"—of which a reproduction hints better than words at the quiet tones and at the admirably chosen contour—takes high place. It lives with Leighton's

“Bath of Psyche”—with such an instance of arrangement and drawing—or with the most correct of all Ingres’ Nudes (or with the most charming: certainly “La Source”)—lives with the most health-suggesting, health-breathing of Courbets, with the most rosily robust of Caro Delvaille’s (“Le Sommeil fleuri”), with the dreamiest Henner, with the slimmest and least material of Raphael Collin’s (“Floréal”). “Le Miroir”—Mr Gerald Arbuthnot’s—and “Model Mending her Drapery” (not to speak of a delightful “Nude Figure Reclining” of a certain lithograph, or of a much smaller and exquisite Nude of a now rare dry point)—are two other figure-pieces which witness to the large presence of style and high refinement in the very things in which an artist’s possession of these qualities is tested best.

Roussel’s portrait of his daughter, with folded hands—serene, simple, with, in her delightful childhood, a large and Southern quietude of grace—stands as evidence of his possession of qualities invaluable in Portraiture, and most rare. A big and almost full-length man’s portrait—“Le Docteur Bilderbeck Gomez,” sagacious and penetrating—reveals the grasp of masculine character. A good “Lord Milner” may be in the remembrance of the Public—it made a mark when shown at Colnaghi’s, a few years ago.

Gradually, as this enumeration of successful efforts goes upon its way, we must be arriving, I should think—even those of us who know the artist least—at the conclusion that it is no narrow specialist whose work we survey. And if that is so, there can be no surprise—though there may be a store of pleasure—in the discovery that Landscape, country landscape, and Still Life, have exercised from time to time delightfully this untiring brush. The grey and silver of “A Sheffield Jug” — a Sheffield jug of the good period, in the near neighbourhood of apple blossom—the full red, pale rose, and gleaming white of “Roses in a Clear Vase” are the happiest instances I chance to have seen of Roussel’s dealing with De Heym-like and with Fantin-like subjects. Country landscape is represented by “The Edge of the Wood,” in which two young oak trees catch the light of early afternoon in June; by “The Grass Path,” a broad green way receding into the distance through sun-smitten woodland; and by “Grave Evening,” a little company of birch trees at the beginning of a wood now in mysterious shadow. I was allowed to name “Grave Evening”: so I am sure the title — not the picture — will be considered “too literary” by those who pride themselves upon being craftsmen narrowly, not artists broadly. A student of the poets, like Roussel, will hardly care, however, to snatch at

any opportunity for decreeing the divorce of human sentiment, human association, from Painting. Great craftsman himself, and occupied immensely, as I said towards the beginning, with technical problems, it is the beauty and the poetry of the world and life—the quiet waters, the massed town, this strong man's character, the flowers, that woman's hand, and this child's face—it is all that, our world to-day, and not the technical achievements of the masters who have gone before him, that is the source and origin of Roussel's so refined, so very modern, since always so sincere and personal work.



THE READING GIRL.
By Théodore Roussel.



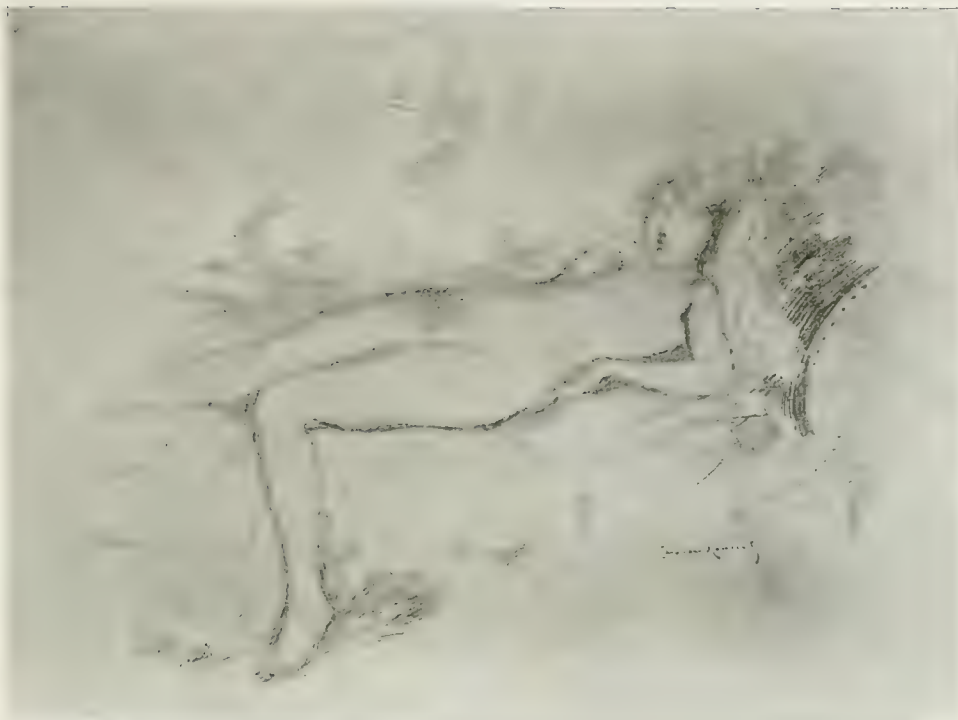
CHELSEA PALACES (*Etching*)
By Théodore Roussel.



Mlle. ROUSSEL.
By Théodore Roussel.



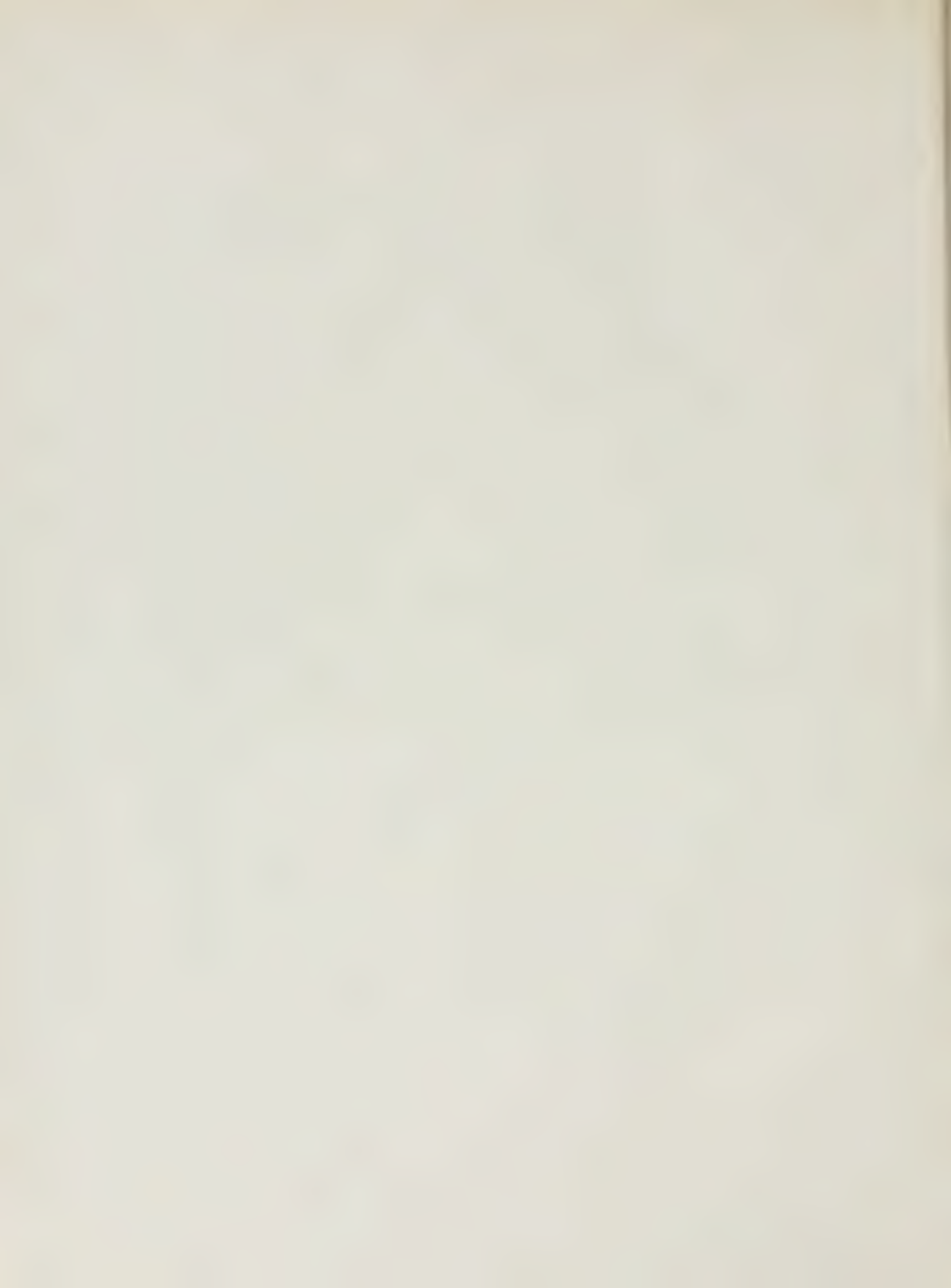
A SHEFFIELD JUG
By Théodore Roussel,



NUDE FIGURE RECLINING (*Lithograph*)
By Théodore Roussel.



LA NUIT : SEPTEMBRE : CHELSEA
By Théodore Roussel.
*In the possession of the
Right Hon. Lord Grimthorpe.*





DR. BILDERBECK GOMIZ
By Théodore Roussel.



LE MIROIR
By Théodore Roussel.
*In the possession of
Gerald Arbuthnot, Esq.*



GRAVE EVENING
By Théodore Roussel.



MODEL MENDING HER DRAPERY
By Théodore Roussel.

P. Wilson Steer

P. WILSON STEER

LESS fanciful, less paradoxical by far than it may seem, is a remark of Joubert's, Matthew Arnold cites—to the effect that there are things it is not difficult to know, provided one does not trouble oneself to define them. Among those things, as I have reason to believe, is Wilson Steer's art, which, during five-and-twenty years about, I have enjoyed and “known” and spiritually possessed, but which I am quite certain I shall never to my own satisfaction properly analyse or describe.

Having delivered myself of which introduction — a prefatory word carefully calculated to give the reader confidence in that which is to follow — I will not so much attack the subject as sail amiably round it, and the conclusion of a short literary cruise will find Mr Steer's art *envisagé*—it may be—from more than one point of view, but yet in the end never defined: still his own secret.

Quite twenty years have passed since, meeting Mr Steer within the walls of the Academy, I noticed his depressed countenance, which revealed the state of his soul as effectively as what he said—though what he said was: “The only

thing that one can care about is Sargent's picture." That was the season in which it had been vouchsafed to Mr Sargent to be for once exquisitely poetic. Struck by the tender light and subdued colour, and by the lovely forms—those little human butterflies, white-robed—about an evening garden, Sargent had given to us a record or creation too charmingly refined to be palpably "clever," and "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose" had, in a happy hour, been added to the achievements of our modern Art. Wilson Steer and I were at one absolutely in admiring that picture. But, having passed my time and concentrated my efforts upon another art than that which is practised in the studio, I have never been enough of a partisan in the art that is Steer's to be enabled to banish from my mind all consciousness of the goodness of certain performances in Painting very different from that one which sufficed to this already then most gifted craftsman.

What was at the Royal Academy that particular year, one may indeed forget ; but it is safe to suppose that there were instances of Leighton's ordered design, of Millais's force, of Watts's noble vision, and of that vigorous, fresh chronicle of the external world which, summer after summer—pourtraying now Devonian farms, now Cornish seas of sapphire and of turquoise—came from the brush of Hook. I must fear, accordingly, that even then—allowing, too, for a permissible

exaggeration in his phrase—Mr Steer's utterance seemed to me rather "young."

Well, Mr Steer *was* young, and had a right to his youth ; and now his youth—of years at least—has vanished, and there exists in place of it a body of notable achievement—portraits, fancy figure subjects, landscapes, nudes—and all this mass of work accomplished, is, taken in its *ensemble*, evidence of his possession of a breadth and range of sympathy as much as of performance, of which that early attitude, genuine but restricted, afforded small promise. Steer is delightfully original. Almost each picture he executes—as his brilliant Goupil Gallery Exhibition attested—is a source of interest. And it is part of his originality that he now shows himself to have been receptive of so many influences. He has looked at, and has learnt from, not a little of great Art. He continues its traditions, and, what is more, he does his part to expand them.

Where many influences have told on Steer, it is the influence of one great Master, and of one great School, that has told on him most conspicuously. The School is that of modern French Impressionists—Claude Monet, for Steer, the leader of them. And the great Master is Constable : himself an Impressionist : an Impressionist before the Impressionists' accepted day : a giant artist, restricted by no formula ; but an artist whose aim his own words in

introducing to the public David Lucas's prints, his work inspired, have sufficiently defined—the “professional purpose” of their publication was “to mark the influence of light and shade on Landscape,” and Constable's own thought, in presence of Nature, was “to give to one brief moment caught from fleeting time ‘a lasting and sober existence.’”

Scarcely otherwise has Gustave Geoffroy, at all events, defined Claude Monet—speaking of him as he was shown in landscapes, eighteen years ago, as “still the incomparable painter of the land and air”: preoccupied therefore with the “fugitives influences lumineuses sur le fond permanent de l'univers.” That last preoccupation has been notably Steer's, and for him there may be claimed what, in an essay upon Jongkind, Geoffroy claimed for that illustrious link between Constable and the Impressionists of to-day — that, while concerned not to discard the older virtues of arrangement and composition, “il prend son place de novateur par son inquiétude des transparences de l'air, des jeux des reflets, des états fugitifs créés par les heures.”

And if I quote from one other French writer, and cite what he too has to say of Jongkind, whom England knows so little, I shall but be asking the aid of another mind than my own in particularising Steer's talent, and in indicating what I conceive is the place he has made it his business to fill. Having referred to the landscape painters — the

“Romantic” landscape painters—of the first half of the Nineteenth Century, “Do not let us think,” says M. de Fourcaud, “that these most famous masters have seized all aspects of the earth and sky,” for, to tell truth, there is wanting to their triumphs “quelque chose de cette mobilité, de cette vie instantanée, de cette ondoyance des aspects changeants—pour tout dire, de ce sentiment de la succession uninterrompue qui nous ravit en présence d’un beau site, où la plus furtive modification de l’atmosphère déplace les clartés, les reflets, les ombres, et transpose les harmonies. Corot lui-même . . . ne donne point l’idée de ce que j’appellerai l’incessante palpitation lumineuse du monde.” Now of the many things that have impressed Steer, in twenty-five years spent mainly in observing and depicting graceful nudes, dramatic skies, far-stretched champaigns, and flowing waters, quiet inn courtyards, girls that are flowers, parlours peopled with youth, I take it that the thing that has impressed him most, and that with the passage of Time he has seized more and more surely, is that which M. de Fourcaud recognised as the pre-occupation of Jongkind—it is that quality of natural things, coy and elusive, “l’incessante palpitation lumineuse du monde.”



THE COTSWOLD HILLS
By P. Wilson Steer.
In the possession of
C. K. Butler, Esq.



THE LOOKING-GLASS
By P. Wilson Steer.
In the possession of
A. M. Daniel, Esq.



THE JAPANESE GOWN
By P. Wilson Steer.
*National Gallery
of Victoria, Melbourne.*



A COURTYARD
By P. Wilson Steer.
*In the possession of
Mrs. Myers.*



CORFE CASTLE
By P. Wilson Steer.
*In the possession of
Mrs Lionel Phillips.*



POOLE HARBOUR

By P. Wilson Steer.

*In the possession of Major Sir
W. Evans Gordon.*

Bertram Priestman

BERTRAM PRIESTMAN

IF the individuality of Priestman, though a subject of interest, is not felt to be any more than Wilson Steer's, in the first instance, an easy one to define, that is rather evidence in favour of the substantial importance of his talent than an argument in support of any foolish contention that his talent is imitative. Of course Priestman has never used the weapon of eccentricity to persuade the world that he is indeed himself. In his time he has been content to be influenced, though never has he been dominated. His gifts have been fortified by happy contact with the art with which he is in sympathy. They have been made momentarily ineffective by association with methods which instinct told him were alien to him.

Priestman has been working now, however, for fully a score of years. And it is during a dozen years now—a dozen roughly speaking—that instinct and reflection have together taken him upon paths very surely his own. His field, in Landscape Painting, is a wide one. He has rebelled at restrictions. Like Browning's *Fifine*, and the flying flag that typified her, he, too, has "fluttered," "frenetic to be free."

Time was when he was accounted a Cattle painter. He is a cattle painter now, in one sense—the sense that, having learnt by this time to paint most things well, he can paint cattle well, and excellently well—cattle in relation to Landscape. But certainly he paints them no better than the skies and low-lying coasts, than churning waves or sunny river-waters. The time has quite gone by when there could properly be affixed to him the label of the specialist.

Priestman may paint again, in fat prairies, the wandering or ruminating kine. Very likely. And no good judge of Modern Art would have reason to be sorry for it. But I know that he is certain to paint again—to paint with even increasing interest, and at least with nothing less than his present quietly-possessioned mastery—the harbour and the ship, the bridge and the canal boat; the Sussex Downs where, in mid-storm, in some hollow or “bottom,” the trees give shelter from the wind, and the grey church nestles. Nor can he stop painting—for he paints with a zest altogether apparent—the great marine horizons, the cloud borne up from the West, the stretch of dreary waters, and, as it bears down on the victim shore it so entirely possesses, the force and gathered impetus of the voluminous sea.

This is not a biographical chapter. The time for

reading Mr Priestman's biography may, I trust, be delayed for yet one whole generation. He is now scarcely more than forty. But a few facts about the work, its leanings at a particular period, as seen through various examples—a few conjectures even, about its methods, about its presumed aims—may well be given, and given now on this page. I do not believe that Priestman's Future is likely to at all surprisingly differ from his Past and his Present. Achievement may be perfected: it is conceivable—it is even to be expected—that performances to come, may, in certain qualities of his Art, outdo the performances of which we can now take cognizance. But Priestman, though enterprising, is not erratic. And, though never a specialist, he will understand the limits that are set to Endeavour. This or that facet of his talent will no doubt be more fully revealed. And—if knowledge exists amongst us, or taste for healthy Art—there is quite sure to come increasing recognition of the productions of a temperament masculine, sensitive, and sane. About this landscape artist's performances there is no fear whatever of encountering either the tricks that weary or the monotony that palls. But, in the matter of prophecy, I will vouchsafe nothing further.

An interesting fact—but not a particularly creditable one to us, that I can see—is the greater encouragement

that, thus far, this painter has received abroad than at home. Not indeed that duly qualified Criticism here in England has been ungenerous to him; nor that private collectors of taste have failed to open purse-strings; nor that Corporate bodies have declined to adopt his canvases. As regards the last-named matter, pictures of Priestman's are in the municipal Galleries of Bradford, Leeds, and Birmingham (Bradford was the artist's birthplace—he is the son of a collector, Mr Edward Priestman of that town). And — not to hide my light under a bushel—it has been my privilege to ask the lately constituted National Museum of Wales to hang at Cardiff (least Welsh of all conceivable Welsh towns) a small but delicate and well-considered example of his Art. No; Recognition is not wanting altogether. But the Continent has been in advance of us. There are Bertram Priestmans at Ghent and in the Bavarian National Gallery, and in the National Gallery at Buda - Pesth. And—more significant even—the private collector abroad has asserted his desires. Happily for us—for those of our blood, I mean—Staats Forbes and Alexander Young did not delay to recognise the merit of the painter; and in the New South Wales National Gallery, again—thanks perhaps to the initiative of Lord Carlisle and Mr Alfred East—Priestman is represented, and, I doubt not, well.

Honours count, too, as well as purchases. And it is now some years ago that the painter of "Under the Willows," of "Shawford Lock," of "Evening," of "A Mile from the Town" (I include in my enumeration some later work) received Honourable Mention at the Paris International Exhibition, and that for a "Dutch Landscape, with Cows," the Gold Medal was bestowed on him in Munich.

Speaking of a "Dutch Landscape," one is led to remark that Priestman's foreign sojourns have not thus far been frequent or long. He was in Holland about 1895, and again three or four years later. He was in Italy in days closely following his schooldays; but, though his thoughts were turned to Art already, it was not so much to the practice of Art in the country as to the study of it in museums. Italy has said more to many other people—and to some of the least original of people, as well, of course, as to some who are of the best. The Slade School—where, for a couple of terms about, Priestman worked—that, too, has said more to other people. France, with the harmony of its colour, the charm of its homeliness, the extraordinary dignity of its long-stretched lines—France (but I said I was not going to prophesy, did I not?)—France has not done with Bertram Priestman, who, within the last three or four years has made some

record of the streams and pastures and the flying grey clouds of the Somme. I recommend to him the uplands about Dijon, with their "*bon soleil de Bourgogne*" — still more, Western Provence: the part of it that lies between the mountains of Les Maures and the long chain of the Esterel, where, with a foreground of low pines and wild and pungent herbage, the bay and Valescure and Roman Fréjus stretch out in the large light of stainless skies.

But, meanwhile, apart from the visit to Italy, purely educational, and not making too much of the visits to Holland—though there the painter was in sympathy with its broad modern art, as well as with its natural features and their illumination — Priestman's sources of interest have been some of the least sensational of the aspects, and accordingly some of the least tourist-haunted of the districts, of England. Often the Suffolk and the Essex coasts. And lately, the country abutting upon Romney Marsh—Rye, for instance. The landscape artist, be he painter or etcher, be his pre-occupation in Nature, colour, line, or light, finds Rye interesting. Frank Short has found it interesting for line, for instance. And, for light and colour, Brabazon.

North Wales also — North - Western Wales — has interested Priestman: and in the small picture of "A Fishing Village" (Pwllheli) he has noted the glowing

sunshine of the September afternoon; the humble slate-roofed cottages — their whitewashed walls aglow with level sunlight—and mooring posts and stranded boat and the still estuary or river-mouth waters, seen through the only just perceptible but yet enveloping veil of the sea-moistened air.

This little picture and the like of it are examples of Priestman's recent delicacy, of his heightened vision for colour: suavity, harmony, as of old — but the key no longer low. The delicacy is there; one is glad to see, too, at no sacrifice of breadth—breadth which has always, from the very first, been one of the most rightly valued of his characteristics, so that I have been able to speak of his art as masculine essentially—vigorous without effort—masculine, that is, by nature, and not by pre-determined exhibition of prowess.

But a painter may have—and, indeed, to be an artist, he must have—conscious aims as well as, so to say, instinctive movements and utterance. In the things about him in this visible and changing world, certain qualities engage him most: certain properties or aspects of things arrest him and invite from him their record. In natural objects, massiveness, and not multiplicity of detail, is, I am sure, to Priestman, the charm—massiveness and a certain simplicity. To secure the qualities he cares for most, a seeming simplicity—a relative simplicity—of treat-

ment is inevitable. But behind it lies some subtlety of knowledge. And thus there is attainable by him a unity that is not that of paucity or emptiness. And there is attained, too, a decisiveness—no *pose* of mere dexterity, but rightness of choice in almost every touch, and an artist's proper regard for the capacity and charm of the medium he has chosen to be his medium of expression. Oil paint is Priestman's medium of expression. And though he never loses himself in mere *bravura* of execution, he does, I think, revel in what oil paint pre-eminently gives him—the opportunity for the exercise of free and flowing line.

Interesting in itself, Priestman's art—which is without affectation—is interesting, too, as being associated with the quite modern reaction from the last generation's gospel. His painting is modern, partly because in its vision it embraces as worthy so much of the visible world that the lover of prettiness, of obvious picturesqueness, rejects; and partly because its very method reveals a return to the greater traditions—to “the large utterance of the early”—they were by no means the very earliest—“Gods.”



CEMENT WORKS
By Bertram Priestman.
*In the possession of
Miss Albright.*



A MILE FROM THE TOWN

By Bertram Priestman.

In the possession of the Hon.

Grace Tolleran Esq.



THE MEADOW STREAM
By Bertram Priestman.
*In the possession of
H. E. Leetham, Esq.*



STORM AT DOVER
By Bertram Priestman,



VALLEY PASTURES
By Bertram Priestman.
In the possession of
W. H. Ayer, Esq.



THE CHURCH ON THE HILL
By Bertram Priestman.

Walter Sickert

WALTER SICKERT

WHEN Guillaumin, the venerable Impressionist painter—contemporary of Monet and Degas—saw at the Bernheims', a few years ago, an exhibition of the work of Sickert, and Sickert was in his company, he had little or nothing but praise for the interiors, the Genre subjects: "Je vous en félicite," he said, and added, in the frank French way, "Mais avouez que le Paysage ne vous intéresse pas!" And Sickert, I have reason to believe, was ready to make that acknowledgment. And there is good cause to surmise that if, with Landscape—pure Pastoral or Romantic Landscape, that is—there had been coupled this other branch of Art, Religious or Allegorical Painting, the matters in which Sickert is not interested would have been once for all enumerated. For though the public has been apt to identify him with but one or two sorts of subjects—with the Music Hall interior, the daughter of the people, the portrait sometimes distressingly candid, or even, by its emphasis on certain characteristics, not wholly free from the suspicion of caricature—unusual, in truth, is his range.

Why, in Landscape itself—notwithstanding Guillaumin's significant qualification—in the Landscape of Towns, at least (and this, like other Landscape, has light and shade, and climate and weather), Sickert has had his curiosity, his experiments, his distinguished successes. With him, in the "Fondamenta del Malcanton"—in spirit and suggestiveness almost a "Rue des Mauvais Garçons" of Venice—Venice is not all architecture, not all monument: Sickert's—like Méryon's own—is a dramatic portrayal; and this dark scene, composed so ably, ominous and mysterious, might be the very scene of tragedy—of Browning's *In a Gondola*, say. And with Sickert, in the "Old Hôtel Royal, Dieppe"—that drawing, full of accurate observation and intricacy, which is the property of M. Jacques Blanche—it is not the one great hostelry, it is not the record of a building alone, that has seemed engaging; it is all Dieppe, or all the front of Dieppe, that is conveyed or suggested.

The range of Sickert's interests—in life, just as much as in Art—is due in part, it may be, to the many streams that have made up the river of his being. No wonder that his work seems cosmopolitan. A German by descent, on the paternal side—the son and grandson of professional artists Germany avows: his father a painter and a draughtsman on the *Fliegende Blätter*—there is English

blood in Sickert, and the results of long association with our land; and, to this perhaps dominant element is to be added, not only the average Englishman's traditional love of Italy, but—and the addition is more notable—the personal inclination towards France, as responding best to Sickert's own ideals, and satisfying most his needs. By nature, and by a great and long and fruitful familiarity with France, few men are more Gallic.

The fact in Sickert's life most prominently in view—one of the two or three things only that are remembered about him, alike by the chance visitor to picture galleries and by the slight, swift, snap-shot "critic," who is a reporter ineffectually disguised—is his association with Whistler. "Pupil of Whistler," they will tell you; imitator of Whistler being what is meant to be implied. Pupil of Whistler, Sickert was, indeed, and a young and trusted friend; and I remember Whistler not in the least hesitating to impart to me, in speaking of another follower, how different were the two personalities, and how much the more sympathetic to him was "Walter"—for "Sickert" in the grand French way I like (the "Sickert" of the signature) he had not become.

To Whistler I have always found Sickert grateful for the example of an exquisite genius—for his instructiveness and wit in conversation and teaching, and for the

delight his art has scattered. But Sickert's aims and efforts were different from the Master's, almost from the first; only here and there, and in an early etching or two rather than in painted pieces, is the direct influence apparent, and even then — although not perhaps quite as conspicuously as is the case with the early Chelsea etchings of that firm and valued friend of Whistler's, Théodore Roussel—likeness of place and theme tends to deceive us not a little as to similarity of performance. That is not nearly so great as is supposed.

An influence much deeper than Whistler's upon Sickert is, I conceive, the influence of Degas. The shrinking from no theme because of a supposed unworthiness or commonness, must indeed have been characteristic of Sickert from the beginning—since he has never wanted audacity, joy in audacity, and a little inclination to surprise people—and especially stupid people. But I am certain that the courage and the frankness of his experiment has been confirmed by Degas's example and friendship. In Degas, Sickert had to admire not only a master of observation, but a master of draughtsmanship. Degas had dealt with the lights and shades of the theatre; with the obscure *baignoire* and the glare of the footlights; and, again, at rehearsals, in the harsh and shivering daylight, with the gyrations of the fifth - row ballet - girl,

in act to learn her business. Sickert frequented the music hall; and, for choice, not the West End music hall. A comedian whom he esteemed more highly than almost any of those who, at our *collet monté* theatres, displayed themselves in Sheridan and Shakespeare—Miss Bessie Bellwood—was not, he told me, to be seen to advantage in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly Circus; no, nor even at the “Oxford.” For those of us who aspired to probe and estimate her art and temperament, pilgrimage to the “Middlesex” in Drury Lane—or even to, I forget what haunts of popular pleasure in the far East End—became necessary since it was there that Miss Bellwood might be reckoned upon to be emancipated and *débordante*. This vanished artist, I believe, is not the lady depicted as upon the stage, in the now, alas! destroyed picture of “Sam Collins’ Music Hall,” a preserved photograph of which permits a reproduction in these pages.

To what one may describe as the early or Music Hall period, which closed a dozen or fifteen years ago, when Sickert went to Dieppe, there followed, in his Art and life, a middle period, lasting a decade, during which, apart from occasional Portraits, such as our pleasant one of Mrs George Swinton, the artist chiefly busied himself with buildings—sometimes quite for their own sakes, but oftener as of necessity the chief element in the Landscape of Towns.

Within this period he painted Venice not a little, and one Norman town very much. To it belong a group of studies of St Mark's, low in tone generally—too low sometimes, sometimes impressive, never wanting in dignity—and that admirable canvas, the "Fondamenta del Malcanton," which has already been spoken of. To it also belongs how various a vision of that many-sided place, Dieppe; port, and watering place, and market town; which has cliffs to paint, great churches to paint, quaint heavy Seventeenth and graceful Eighteenth Century houses, little old cafés that were great houses once, and the life of the harbour, and the life of the beach.

Comparing the Venetian with the Dieppe groups, although it must be recognised that the first contains excellent and very personal things—and this notwithstanding the immense frequentation of Venice by artists of all lands, and its pictorial Past, unduly oppressive to present effort—we have upon the whole to pronounce the Venetian pieces inferior to the long chronicle of Dieppe. For this there are two reasons. One, that Venice—and not alone because it has been illustrated by so many—was, in the nature of things, less Sickert's "affair." The other, that he knew it far less. He knew it less because, though never a Cook's tourist, still, relatively, to the end, he was but stranger and sojourner. In Venice his opportunities

were scanty. But at Dieppe it was a case of year upon year—not steadily, but still abundantly; the objects seen in many moods and many lights; the truth about them—all that they contain—gradually revealed to him, learnt by him, and made use of.

Now, something like a third period—a late: of course, not Sickert's last, for he is barely fifty—seems to have opened. And if, in the first period, or first phase, we have to recognise, if we are seeking for influences, the influence of Degas, in this new third there are together traces of Rembrandt, Claude Monet, Toulouse - Lautrec. Singular combination! in itself the evidence of this artist's originality. The pieces are interiors generally: sometimes domestic; sometimes of intimate life not quite domestic; the alcove and the chance encounter. In them the Nude is introduced. If I have named Claude Monet in connection with them, it is because of their illumination; their often vibrating colour, vibrating light. If I have named Rembrandt, it is because the nudities of Rembrandt seem to have appealed to Sickert; volume, not elegance; massiveness in movement or in stability—not grace. And perhaps—except for their occasional themes—I need not have named Toulouse-Lautrec at all; for certainly their spirit is not cynical, as was the spirit of that strange, proud genius; they are plain matter-of-fact;

“sordid,” it may be, is the adjective that would find most acceptance here ; but why should we deny to them their proper praise, since, technically brilliant, they are also dramatic and human ? Again, Sickert’s third period has another characteristic than that which these performances afford ; I mean, the return to the theme of what was well-nigh the first hour—the resumption and completion, in Painting and in Etching, of subjects of the Music Hall. An artist and observer complex and subtle and a little wayward—one in whom several civilisations meet—Sickert is yet faithful, in the main, to his first love ; and in his vivid presentation of popular joys and primitive emotions, the craft he cares for is wont to seem sufficiently exercised.



OLD HÔTEL ROYAL, DIEPPE (*Drawing*)

By Walter Sickert.

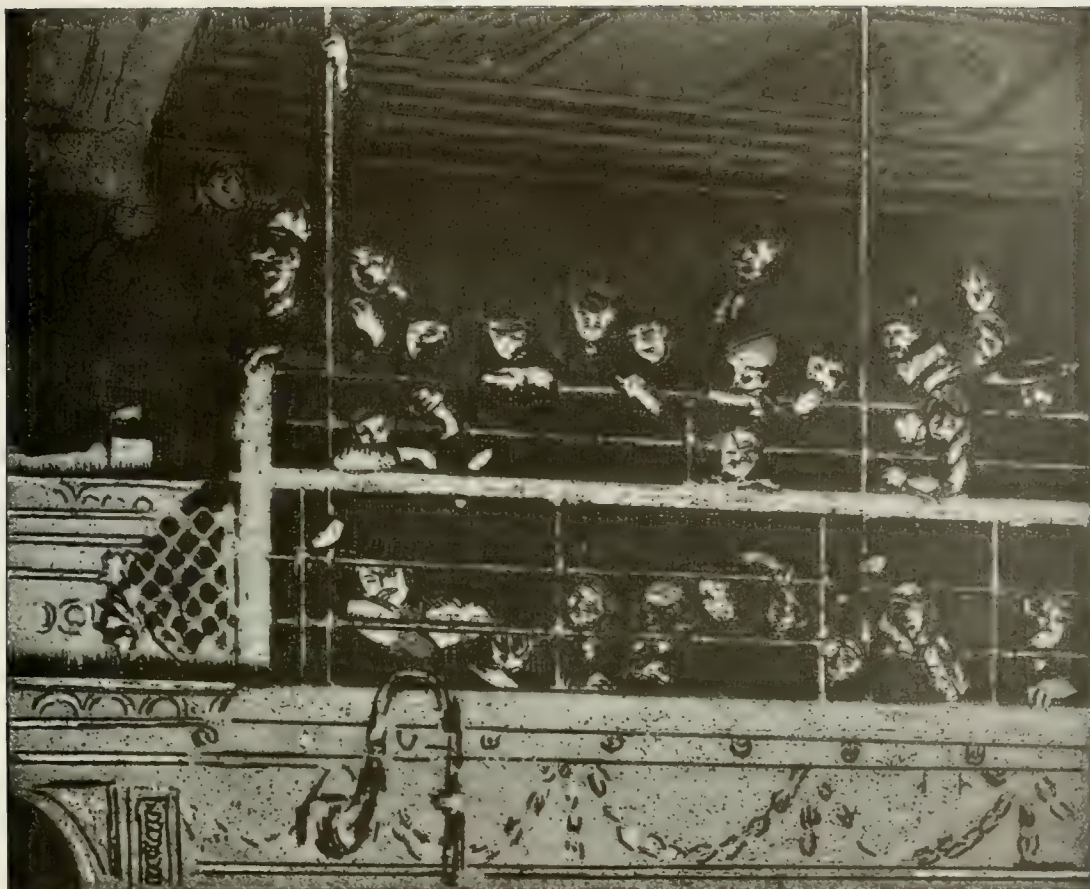
*In the possession of
M. Jacques Blanche.*



"SAM COLLINS"
By Walter Sickert.



MRS GEORGE SWINTON
By Walter Sickert.
*By permission of
Messieurs Bernheim Jeune et fils.*



"THE MIDDLESEX" (*Etching*)
By Walter Sickert.



FONDAMENTA DEL MALCANION

By Walter Sickert.
*In the possession of
Mrs. Ena-uric.*



CAMDEN TOWN: INTERIOR

By Walter Sickert,

*In the possession of
Hugh Hammersley, Esq.*

David Muirhead

DAVID MUIRHEAD

AMONG our younger Painters, few are the men who have had more right to impress one than Mr David Muirhead. I am sure he has never obtruded himself. I see in all his work—and did not need to see, in several conversations with the man—that the self-assertion that wins the cheap, the gaudy, the evanescent success, is something foreign to his nature ; it is a course and habit of which he is incapable. In the practice of his art, I do not recollect that Muirhead has shown a single picture which, rapidly attracting our attention, as certainly ensured its rapid withdrawal. But many pictures I remember that seemed, at the first instant, modestly in the right path ; that seemed, later, to disengage and make apparent an individuality we had not suspected ; that finished by establishing their hold upon us, as things quietly able, entirely artistic and satisfactory.

I suppose the New English Art Club to have been the first place at which Mr Muirhead exhibited. Certainly it is there that, during the last ten years about, his pictures have been steadily seen. Mr Staats Forbes—who bought

so largely, both of the famous and of the little celebrated, and generally of the good—there learned to know him, and to acquire the habit of searching for his unsensational canvases, of sterling worth. It was at the New English Art Club, possibly, that Mr Charles Moore recognised the quality of Muirhead's labour; or that may have been at the Exhibitions of "The Society of Twenty-Five," where also he has been accustomed to be seen. Perhaps Sir Charles Darling acquired the Muirhead he possesses ("The Wooden Bridge," of our illustration), at once veracious and dramatic, from an Exhibition held last year, in what I suppose to be the only suburb of London in which it is possible for Life to be mainly artistic: I am thinking of an Exhibition that I unfortunately missed, though I have seen many things that were in it. It was a small Exhibition, confined to David Muirhead's work, and it was held in an upper chamber, known as "The Chenil Gallery," some way down the King's Road—the Chenil Gallery, where excellent things have been seen, before or since, by Orpen and by Roussel.

These are details. It will be better to leave them, and let people be told, for a minute, before I speak particularly of the character of the work, what were David Muirhead's beginnings, and what his education in drawing and painting. He was born in Edinburgh. From boyhood

he had yearned to be a painter. His father desired him to be an architect. He was articted to an architect. He went through the appointed time; and that done with, he addressed himself to the art of his choice. His schools were, first the Life-school of the Royal Scottish Academy, and then the Westminster School of Art, directed at that day by Professor Fred Brown. He did good work in both these schools, and then emerged—went his own way—which has never been a way of revolt.

And that last statement—that his way has never been a way of revolt—is one that I should like to emphasise and amplify. It hints at one of David Muirhead's characteristics which we have the right to most esteem. An imitator of no one, it has been far, certainly, from Muirhead's aim to be a mere innovator. With the self-confident assertion of a novel personality he has never been in the least preoccupied. He has developed naturally—I do not know that we need say slowly; for there are certain qualities in certain of his pictures of eight years ago that have not in the succeeding years been surpassed. The "Stonehaven" shows that—the old-world Scottish town-front, pale brown and red, behind telling and well-disposed lines of the boat's rigging and cordage in the port. I find that little picture thoroughly individual, though it was painted already eight years ago — when Muirhead was

assuredly young. But it is individual in part by its reticence; in part by its self-control. No art of splutter or of show is here disclosed, or the possibility of such even surmised. The picture is veracious and tender; well arranged, restful.

But Muirhead has developed; and, constant always to a certain reserve, a certain Classicism of feeling, a certain presence of dignity and style, he has yet shown no small variety of subjects and effects. Not imagining too quickly that he has exhausted a given theme, or come to an end of its profitable treatment, he has yet not repeated himself. As far as Landscape is concerned—and it is Landscape in its widest sense; the fields and skies and rivers; open country; *paysage de ville*, if hardly *paysage de mer* as well, that has engaged him—he has shown himself a cordial observer of Nature, as well as an appreciative student, I must surmise, of some great English Art, and of some great Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century.

It is here that the Classic comes in. Greatly must it have been absorbed—the Classic method—to have been so loved and so revealed. Of course, one does not use “Classic” in the sense of the product of Antiquity or of Italian Art — as one does use it when Jan Both and Nicholas Berghem are called Classic; painters with whose art the art of Mr Muirhead can certainly be in no special

sympathy. But one uses the word "Classic" as applying to great men who have stood the test of Time. One may use it fairly of Ruysdael and of Philip de Koninck, as well as of Claude, Poussin, and Richard Wilson. And amongst these various Classics, I cannot help feeling that Ruysdael and De Koninck have had much influence upon Muirhead. Rembrandt, too—the rare, great Landscape of Rembrandt, whether in Painting or in Etching—must, I think, be named. Nor would one deny that a yet later Classic, in that true sense—Constable—has been often present to Mr Muirhead's memory. And it is not by accident, I think, that in an enumeration like this, of possible influences—an enumeration full, of course, of hazardous guess—there has not been named a single artist given (as Turner, at a certain stage, was given) to undue multiplication of objects and details within the four walls of a single canvas. These Classics I have mentioned have done nothing to destroy or to imperil, in their deeply considered labour, that rare and precious acquisition, unity of effect. Nor, it seems to me, has this reticent painter, frugal of incident and prodigal of thought, David Muirhead.

Since the Scotch subjects, or at least the one Scottish subject—the town and port of Stonehaven, treated in various ways—it is the counties of Huntingdon and Yorkshire—fen and moor and wold and stream—that have

been specially affected by a painter never in anxious search of what is obviously romantic — rather recoiling from the obviously grandiose — and enjoying most of all, of late years as it seems to me, natural effects, the passage of weather over wide stretches of the English land. The autumn of 1908 saw Mr Muirhead establishing himself at Danbury, on the uplands of the county of Essex; it is a few miles from Chelmsford. But, save in one or two preliminary sketches in oil, and in several charming and original water - colours, delightful on their own account, and interesting, too, as the painter's already very characteristic exercises in a medium that was new to him, I have not, up to the time of writing, been enabled to see the results of an expedition from which I confess that I should expect the happiest issue. I know that Yorkshire was successful as a painting ground, and that Huntingdon and the Fen Country have been successful more than once. To 1906, for example, belongs a happy instance of David Muirhead's practice, drawn from the last-named district—"Ouse, at St Ives," a tract or reach of the river, lying light grey in the forefront of the picture. And to the same year, I think, belongs "The End of Summer"; the scene is the high ground above the Ouse, between St Ives and Huntingdon. There are trees, and very broken clouds, and, beyond the shadowed foreground,

strips of sunlit landscape further enliven a scene which that broken sky of itself vivifies. This is a picture of fairly important, but by no means of excessive size. It succeeds as well as any of the smaller. So does "The Pool" of 1905, with four trees lifting themselves against a sky now opening. This is a Norfolk picture, of amazing *finesse*.

Now and again this sterling and impressive artist in Landscape has made worthy, or, at the very least, not discreditable experiments in Portraiture or Genre — or, if not quite in the latter (for Mr Muirhead is not an Orpen), at all events in that Fancy Portraiture which is the link that connects Genre with Portraiture proper. Readers may settle for themselves precisely to which class belongs "The Letter"—a large picture which, being of the year 1900, I think, belongs to the first period of definite accomplishment. It has some charm, and it has subtleties; though we may not think that it is in the treatment of interiors that Mr Muirhead at that moment, or at any moment, has most excelled. Still, it is dignified work.

Enough to-day. At some later time, I, or, failing me, then certainly some other writer, will be called upon to follow the later course and the advanced development of one in whose career, from end to end, I have good

reason to be confident. The Public, too. For David Muirhead's talent — genuine, carefully nurtured — is not a talent of apparition and of disappearance, but—I am convinced by its distinction and its seriousness—of steady and sustained and excellent service.



THE LETTER
By David Muirhead.



THE HARBOUR, STONEHAVEN
By David Muirhead.



THE OUSE NEAR HUNTINGDON
By David Muirhead.



A WOODLAND FOOL.
By David Muirhead.



THE WOODEN BRIDGE.

By David Muirhead.

*In the possession of
Sir Charles Darling.*

(Photo, Hollyer)



CHURCH IN THE FENS
By David Muirhead.

Horace Mann Livens

HORACE MANN LIVENS

LIVENS, in one department of his Art a master of extreme accomplishment and force, and in all using his means with reticence and careful economy, is sure—if any one is sure—of avoiding popularity, with its attendant evils, and sure, too, of keeping and extending what he has secured—his “*clientèle d’élite*.” You are indifferent to his things—more than indifferent perhaps, for you may actually dislike them—or you are seized by them, and they hold you, and their hold upon you will never be relaxed.

It must be nearly a quarter of a century ago that H. M. Livens was a student at the Antwerp Academy, where then there lingered—as, for all that I can tell, there may yet linger—the traditions of Baron Leys, which gave to the oil work of Livens, as much about the same time (or was it earlier?) they must have given to the work of a less original, but not unworthy painter, Logsdail, a blackness, an obscurity of tone, which has proved a fault most difficult of cure, though some there are—and Logsdail, if I remember rightly, among them—

who have overcome it. Endowed by Antwerp with that one defect, of which I happen to know Livens is conscious, and which from time to time in his oil pictures and now habitually in noble water-colours, he does triumphantly avoid, Livens yet, he tells me, feels grateful to Antwerp—to Antwerp in the person of Monsieur Verlat, the head-master—for the thoroughness and continuity of its training, and for the insistence of that school (again in M. Verlat's person) upon the essentials, upon the firm foundations of things. And, of the essentials—for much work at all events—none can be counted of more capital importance than impeccable drawing.

A little later, Livens is to be found in Paris; not working with his brushes, but with his mind alone—a keen and trained observer. Whistler, with his extraordinary elimination of the superfluous, with the profundity of his concealed labour, was then—or upon Livens' return to England, which is his native land—to impress him; and most by the portrait of Miss Alexander. It was in Paris, at all events, that he submitted to the two other great influences of his life; the work of Manet and the work of Ribot, in method and in aim so different in many ways, but so alike in this, that by each every subject was felt and was presented, not as a light and far-away or unimportant accident, but, in the noble

phrase of Wordsworth, as "a grave reality." For Manet's land and coast pieces, and his figures, and Ribot's rare Still-life and wonderful, inspired transcripts of the character and temperament of the fresh child and of the storm-tried woman, quite equally witnessed to reverence for fact, to interest in every theme, and to a deep sense of the dignity of matter.

And some time afterwards — ten or a dozen years later, I think—one further influence, useful enough in its own way, and in his case not overpowering, Livens became conscious of. He feels quite sufficiently grateful to it; it may be even a little overrates it, for he writes to me, "In talking about beginnings, starting-points, suggestions, I ought perhaps to have told you that at the Fowl period" — he has been a unique painter of the movement and the colour of Fowls, a Hondecoeter or Charles Jacque of his epoch, but always summary and simplifying—"I had the advantage of seeing a good number of the best Japanese prints and paintings, at Arthur Morrison's, which certainly influenced me; their grace and their suggestion of space, as well as exquisite colour, being a constant guide; while at the absolute decision of their charming yet relentless Line I shall always look longingly — knowing I cannot reach it." Whatever may be the case with Livens' transcripts of

his quick visions of fowl-run and roosting-place, Line—"relentless and charming," or relentless and interesting at the least—is a chief characteristic of those abrupt and noble, seemingly rough, really so subtle Water-colours which, as a whole, much more than other branches of his work, afford profound assurance of what, amongst qualified judges, will be, in no remote Future, Livens' fame and rank.

Livens is an artist of untiring experiment, and in his sequence of experiments he ensures freshness—which, likewise, he never gives himself the chance of losing through persistence in execution till execution becomes stale. And many mediums are his, as well as many themes. Oil painting has been mentioned; so has Water-colour. He has worked in Dry-point—a method of original engraving direct and, if need be, rapid; quickly productive of fascinating effect; and if multiplication of impressions be an object, quickly also disappointing, for deterioration begins almost from the beginning, and the artist in dry-point, anxious to sustain quality, yet not enamoured of the changes wrought by repair, finds himself at the end with no substantial edition—with a light handful of prints. No experiment of Livens' has been happier—I mean in the two or three best examples of it—than that of allying, in the portraiture of a vase with flowers, a little colour with dry-

point. And the "two or three best examples" are those in which the colour was not printed, but put upon the paper by the artist's hand — the dry-point keeping at the time its virginal intactness. In these there is not only the jar and the flowers, but the atmosphere, shadowed and warm, that creeps about them. Then, in pure dry-point, there is a little plate of his two children, deep in their passion for music.

But from experiments of all kinds with themes and with mediums, Livens comes back in all these later years — the last half-dozen, say — of his accomplishment and maturity, to the largish, apparently rough, but always most sedately and completely considered Water - colours which form the surest basis of his reputation. They are, in kind and quality, unique; and, as to subject, they have interest abundant and varied. Lines of black chalk now mark what I may call their "bony structure"—for the essential and unclothed form of the objects in a drawing corresponds to the skeleton in the figure—and now give richness, even grimness and gloom, to small spaces of shadow. Masses of Chinese white, touched here and there by colour cunningly chosen, dexterously applied, are now found modified, playing their proper part—and with extraordinary effectiveness — in the scheme. By methods the most absolutely opposed to those of stipple

and repeated sponging, colour in larger masses, wherever it is wanted — local colour a little “abstract,” a little generalised, brought always into a singular and satisfying harmony—is frankly and simply laid on. The balance is remarkable, and the breadth. And so there are built up for us, less, much less, by the visible labour of the strong and certain hand than from that great reserve of knowledge in the background — knowledge of drawing, of perspective, of just proportions, of the shapes and substances of things, of movement, of composition—those virile and seductive summaries of the very spirit of the selected scene and the selected hour which pass so far beyond the conventional and elegant transcript of endless minor facts. And yet, the more we study these masculine drawings — the more the opportunity is ours for really knowing them—the more (if we are fitted to receive them) shall we discern in them facts unsuspected, to which has been allowed their due, and no more than their due place ; and the more shall we perceive, too, how, along with the most fearless treatment of characteristic features, creative Art comes in with little touches to modify, or to enrich, or to endow with a beauty that “wears.” And the beauty that wears must be, let us remember, a beauty high and subtle ; never trivial and obvious.

An artist working in the spirit, painting modern Life

in the spirit, that I suppose I have to some extent indicated, is not a likely man to undertake, at the suggestion of the dealer, a remunerative tour to remote lands. It is his to extend the range of our observation and enjoyment by first perceiving character in the things that are about him, and then presenting that character and wringing from it its interest. He paints, of course, not all he sees, but all that he elects to see.

So it is now the little homestead—the fowls Livens has been noted for—the garden under snow; or the “Flooded Chalk Pit,” with a light screen of tree-boughs hiding not much, but hiding a little effectually, of those suburban villas on the Surrey chalk-line that are a part of the picture. And now it is a very stern draughtsman who is on the Thames with us, setting down the receding massiveness of Kew Bridge, seen in perspective; and now at Richmond we are in the company of one who has been touched by the tender harmonies of dusk, with a few stray lights a-twinkle. Then the domestic Englishman’s August holiday, a bit of Worthing, quaintly quiet in itself, though the scene, momentarily, of the bustle of children. Then “Brighton: October Day,” the crispness and clear colour, and Autumn everywhere, an illumination vivid and unstable; then “Brighton: November Day,” the dull and changeless and begrudged brown light.

And then a summer vision of the Marine Parade, the old Royal Crescent, Brighton; its last houses in shadow, a foil to the splendid brilliance this afternoon sunshine sheds upon the stucco—a white turned golden—of that late Georgian and Victorian edifice, “The Crescent Hotel.” The motive and very subject of this drawing is repeated in the oil picture, but the oil piece is less lustrous, in a key less high: here again then, meritorious and sterling as is the picture, I find the water-colour more fascinating. The next thing may be Folkestone Harbour: the collier unloading; the glaucous water of the port; and, beyond various craft, the little Classic Custom-house, grey in the distance.

Finally, perhaps — for this is not a catalogue — I may name one vision of London: “The Berkeley,” with a suggestion of the gaiety of June; the “Berkeley” not seen from crowded Piccadilly, but from the north-east corner of the Green Park—just on the Park side of the railings; the white, tall restaurant looked up to from the beginning of a rise in the gravel path, and framed by the summer leafage of the high foreground trees. This, too, is characteristic, in an inspired audacity, as in a half-concealed refinement, of treatment, and in the dexterous avoidance of what, in that gay spectacle, another would have considered inevitable — the presentation of some

everyday and well - dressed fashionable figure. Livens' figures are the "landscape painter's figures," born to stay in that right spot exactly, where now we discern them. To the "Berkeley" they will never attain ; and it is the very mixture of such different worlds that suggests London.



WYANDOTTE COCK AND HEN
By H. M. Livens.



THE TARRED FENCE: WINTER (*Water-colour*)
By H. M. Livens.



RICHMOND BRIDGE: TWILIGHT (*Water-colour*)
By H. M. Livens.



THE WHITE VASE
By H. M. Livens.



CRESCENT HOTEL, BRIGHTON
By H. M. Livens.



BRIGHTON : OCTOBER DAY
By H. M. Livens.



FOLKESTONE: COLLIER UNLOADING (*Water-colour*)
By H. M. Livens.



THE FRUIT BOAT, FOLKESTONE
By H. M. Livens.



"THE BERKELLY" (*Water colour*)
By H. M. Livens.

Philip Connard

PHILIP CONNARD

PHILIP CONNARD—to the general public the name is not a familiar one, and again am I concerned, much to my happiness, with a painter whom mainly those who look out sympathetically for new, strong work, have discerned, admired, remembered.

Mr Connard is not a beginner. He is at that interesting point in any man's life-history, at which, having shown conclusively to those who know, what is the stuff of which he is made—having, indubitably, by strength of talent, emerged from the crowd—it remains to be seen what is the precise degree of artistic accomplishment and public acceptance which he will attain, and what indeed is the goal that he will finally reach. In saying this I scarcely expose myself to the accusation of classing Mr Connard among the “promising.” The “promising”—if we use the word carefully, and in no place but its right one—are students with their first successes at the Schools, or very youthful people who, in the midst of certain difficulties, have contrived to give sign that along with immaturities, or with faults, even, which

may never be mended, they have something unusual, something of their own. Four or five years ago—perhaps yet a little more lately—that word “promising” might have been used of Mr Connard without offence or injustice. I think it now inappropriate. Inappropriate it has surely been, during already two or three seasons of Picture-Exhibitions. Mr Connard, for the last two or three years, has been giving, not promises, but performances, brilliant and worthy.

The best part of his life, of course, should still be in the Future, and with the biography of the living, and especially of the young, I am not apt to be concerned. Or—to put that matter more accurately—I am concerned with it, with any of its details, in so far only as one feels that the knowledge of this fact here, and of that fact there, throws light upon the work done, and the work still to be done—is commentary upon that which is accomplished, or indication of that which is to come. That a man is at heart a serious, independent artist—that his life is ordered in some accordance with the place and influence and dignity which may be his—that so, production, and fine production, is facilitated, and not hindered—all this it is agreeable and comforting and even valuable to know. All this. And, I think, not much more.

Nothing more, perhaps, but a few little guiding facts—we do not disdain the mile-stone that tells us where we are, or the finger-post that points the way. And so about Philip Connard—before I try my hand at a brief summary of his characteristics, affording some slight hints at that which differentiates him, not only from the mass of painters who can come to nothing, but from some of the more gifted brethren in whom we must recognise his peers—it is well to set down what presently, if not to-day, *Who's Who* has got to tell us. And that is just the following: that Mr Connard, with not too prolonged opportunities of what we call “general education,” contrived, when he was twenty—in 1896, that was—to get a Scholarship which brought him up from Southport, which was his birthplace, into Kensington (it was for Ornamental Design he got that first Scholarship); that his two years at South Kensington produced another Scholarship, which made it possible for him to go to Paris, to Julian’s; that after not too long a sojourn he returned to England, to a period of obscurity and further preparation; that he began to send things—minor things, perhaps necessarily immature, to picture galleries; that he did for the booksellers a little illustration of literary themes generally worthy; that in 1900 he saw three drawings of his exhibited at the Academy (they were the

first that had anywhere found acceptance in public); and then, as to the Exhibitions that he sent to, he tells me that he "gets a little vague," I make no effort to disperse the mists. Suffice it to say now, where I myself remember to have seen him—though I, too, get a little vague when it becomes a question of marshalling his efforts in these places in chronological order; but in any case I have seen him, marked him, during the last two or three years, at the New English Art Club, at the junior Society of Portrait Painters, and at the Goupil Gallery on at least two occasions. One of these was when, along with Mr Gerard Chowne, Mr Alfred Hayward (and who else indeed was it?) he had quite a group of his pictures and oil sketches; the other was at the "Goupil Gallery Salon," a year ago—and the last two years, may I say, have been years of tremendous advance.

And now, the pictures and their character: their range—to some extent their painter's aims in them—aims, by the bye, which are not narrowly confined, which are not certain to be cherished continuously: a fact, I think indicated in a few words written to me by Connard lately: "Perhaps Rembrandt and Turner appeal to me most—that is, at present," he says; "Next week it may be Titian." And one may add, the actual influence upon

his work, of any one among the Great Masters he names, is hard to detect. The truth appears to be, he is more likely to go on admiring—to go on being “appealed to”—than to show from any quarter, however Classic or however Modern, the sign of direct influence. Indirectly Connard is apt, I think, to be influenced, and certainly to be charmed, rather by the masters of Colour than by the masters of Form. Were it otherwise, the prospect for him would not be a good one, as a pure painter. I am disposed to call Philip Connard a born colourist, and add, that while not always or necessarily working in a high key, he does seem specially enamoured of colour in keen light, and especially proficient in the realisation of it.

Does that perhaps give us the clue for finding a certain unity in what is, as to nominal subject, the apparent variety of Connard's effort? Does it bring together under the bond of allied aim that fancy portrait, “Lady in a Green Dress”—and here I must take the opportunity of saying that very characteristic is his skill and his delight in bringing into a canvas some little touch or larger patch, or mere substantial tract even, of vivid green—are there brought together, we were asking, under the bond of allied aim, pieces in theme so different as “Lady in a Green Dress,” “Preparing for the Walk”

(a canvas in the Welsh National Museum), "On the Ramparts, Montreuil," "Interior of a Restaurant," and those Flower-pieces which are all that yet represent this artist at the new picture gallery in Dublin?

About Flower-pieces, I happen to know that Connard's admiration of past or present achievements in this matter has its limits, easily reached. Nothing, he thinks, reflects light so keenly and abundantly as flowers do. And it is in a cascade of light that he elects, generally, to paint his flowers; and the pictures gain the quality he seeks—and they miss, perhaps, here and there a little, qualities great also, that he does not actively seek after and enjoy. I call his Flower painting—so far as one yet knows it—an interesting variation on much that has existed previously, and not by any means inevitably an improvement on it. Still, admitting this, one must concede also that, like Francis James in Water-colour, and like Diaz or Vollon in the medium that is particularly his own, Connard, in Flower-painting, gives life to his scene.

"Life to his scene." He gives life to his scene, however, in nearly everything he paints. Of the bare, spacious room in "Preparing for the Walk," notwithstanding the four human creatures, it is the sunshine that is the dominant influence, the room's important inhabitant. It is so, too, in "Interior of a Restaurant" notwithstanding

the presence of two very well set-up young people at the first of a long row of sunny tables. And the keen light and the breeze of a gay day, in the picture "On the Ramparts, Montreuil," have their effect upon the two young women—sitting and standing figures—communicating brightness, "suggesting" to them—that is the word—"suggesting," in the modern sense of "suggestion," an elasticity and grace of carriage and of action not theirs at every moment—for how much does man's and woman's carriage vary, not only with the mere occupation, but with the thought and mood of the hour.

But there is a landscape of Connard's in which Life is given to the scene by an illumination less radiant; it is a landscape with wafts of air less stimulating. And that is a Norfolk landscape, "Landscape near Eccles." There is another Eccles in Yorkshire, I believe; but Mr Connard shows us a great stretch of Norfolk country—he tells me David Muirhead was painting at the same time in the neighbourhood, and I can well believe it, for the mere scene of Mr Connard's landscape is certainly his also, and so also is its tone. The Eastern Counties painters—this circumstance reminds me—themselves went generally to the great Dutch landscape painters as the source of their art, and its exemplar, and in "Landscape near Eccles" Mr Connard went to them—went to them

as surely, or in his method had them in his mind as much, as David Muirhead on occasions more numerous. For Muirhead is of the true succession—of Rembrandt, Ruysdael, and De Koninck he habitually must more or less remind us. With Connard, this piece was an exception, and in a method now at least unfamiliar to him, with an unwonted attention to tone—low tone—he produced this impressive thing.

And it will be understood that the gulf fixed between this picture and those later canvases on which my comments happen to have been earlier made, is caused, not by inequality of merit, but by diversity of intention. The very existence of that gulf—or its apparentness—is evidence, to some extent, of that extreme flexibility of talent which has been pointed out already as among the chief of Connard's qualities. Did one require to mention in a single line another characteristic that is as marked—that is of the very essence of the matter—one would say (but the reader has already guessed what one would say)—one would say, of course, genius for Colour. "Genius" is not too strong a word; for Connard's colour sense is a sense, it seems to me, inevitably right—I use the word then, even while I remember Fantin's satirical remark to me, that nowadays every young man has "genius," though for the great old men "talent" was

somehow enough. "Genius for Colour." And did one require to name, too, the chief of Connard's present pre-occupations, one would declare, I suppose, with as little hesitation, Pre-occupation with Light.



LANDSCAPE NEAR LOCLES, NORFOLK
By Philip Connard.



THE FATHERS
By Philip Connard.



VAUXHALL
By Philip Connard.



PREPARING FOR THE WALK

By Philip Connard.

*Welsh National Museum,
Cardiff.*



A LADY WITH A SHAWL.
By Philip Connard.



A WOMAN SEATED
By Philip Connard.



ON THE RAMPARTS
By Philip Connard.

Muirhead Bone

MUIRHEAD BONE

MUIRHEAD BONE's reputation, firm already by reason of work done—of work that lies at no mercy of the uncertain future years, his course in which I am without means of predicting—has been gained alone by signal triumphs in Arts not really popular; and it is unusual for an artist hardly yet in early middle age to have any recognised rank through dint of labour outside the one Art as to which the large public entertains curiosity; and that, of course, Oil Painting: the only second that could possibly join it would be the very minor art of Comic Draughtsmanship.

It is as an Etcher, whose method is that generally of Dry-point, and as a draughtsman with pencil and with sepia, that Muirhead Bone has become known, at a time of life at which Whistler was furthest from popular acceptance, and at which Seymour Haden had done little or nothing of that great volume of production which, upon the person of ordinary cultivation, was gradually to impose itself. In England, Cameron's success is probably the only one that has been as rapid and as sure as

Muirhead Bone's; and that success of Cameron's—putting aside the canvases and water-colours of quite recent years—has been attained by Etching only, but by Etching, be it remembered, which, through its frequent choice of subject obviously noble, incontestably interesting, increased the possibility of tolerably wide appeal. Muirhead Bone's acceptance by a wide public has been, if anything, rather delayed than advanced through his selection of his themes—I mean by those which, piquant in their novelty and observation as they have seemed—and rightly seemed—to a few, must have appeared to many as the proof of a wearisomely obstinate dodging of the steps of the “house-breaker,” of an undue devotion to every form of scaffolding, simple and small, or vast and intricate, and of a mania for waiting upon the dissolution of buildings which have had their life and history, have sheltered obscure human loves and labours, or been the scene of popular amusement. The print of “Building” and the little “Strand,” “Clare Market,” “Old and New Gaiety,” and “The Great Gantry”—the interior of Charing Cross Station under repair—come to one's mind as one thinks of that order (and it is the best-known order) of Muirhead Bone's work.

Much of his draughtsmanship with sepia or pencil is an expression of like themes. It, too, has to account for

its success—its success with the connoisseur. And, just as with the dry-points, the reason for that success is found in the high union of close, fresh observation with great technical skill. Of the instruments of his choice, so few, so unpretentious—in many hands so wanting in seductiveness—Muirhead Bone is a master, and of none more completely a master than of that now too often despised instrument, the humble lead pencil. The humble lead pencil—to speak of work done in the Nineteenth Century alone—was the instrument of Ingres in his most penetrating portraits; and, in their drawings, whether of cities or of coasts, a very favourite, happily used instrument indeed of two leaders of water-colour—Samuel Prout, whose place among water-colour painters was long ago unreasonably exalted, and Fulleylove, whose rank among water-colour painters has even lately been stupidly denied.

Now Prout and Fulleylove were both of them—and in unusual measure—assured masters of pencil drawing. Both of them were simple, direct and learned, even if Prout must be admitted to have been, in certain of his sketches, a little unduly pre-occupied with the visibly picturesque, or the visibly complicated or ornate. Two generations divided Bone from one of these men; of the other he has been a younger contemporary; and the

student will find real interest in comparing the work of the three. It may be, Prout's method of employing the pencil was the least varied. It may be, Fulleylove's vision of his theme was the most severe. Bone's view of his subject is near and tolerant—almost affectionate and intimate—and no one knowing a series of his pencil drawings can entertain a doubt as to the flexibility of his method, the suppleness and wide resources of his hand. It may have been implied now, that, clever in the selection of the obligatory touch as are his washed drawings, I set greater store by his pencil work. That and the dry-points have been carried close to the utmost limit of their medium's range.

It is but a dozen years of serious labour—of labour more or less skilled already when those years began—that Bone has as yet devoted to the practice of his two best means of expression, and to this or that other means of expression in which he has not succeeded as well, and which, had he been wisely advised—or had the gods withheld from him awhile his Scottish pertinacity—he would not, it appears to me, have so often and so assiduously essayed. Witness, for instance, the comparative fruitlessness of his labours when, because the first illustrations made for a book of Mrs Bone's were found to be such as would reproduce badly—though charming, I believe, in

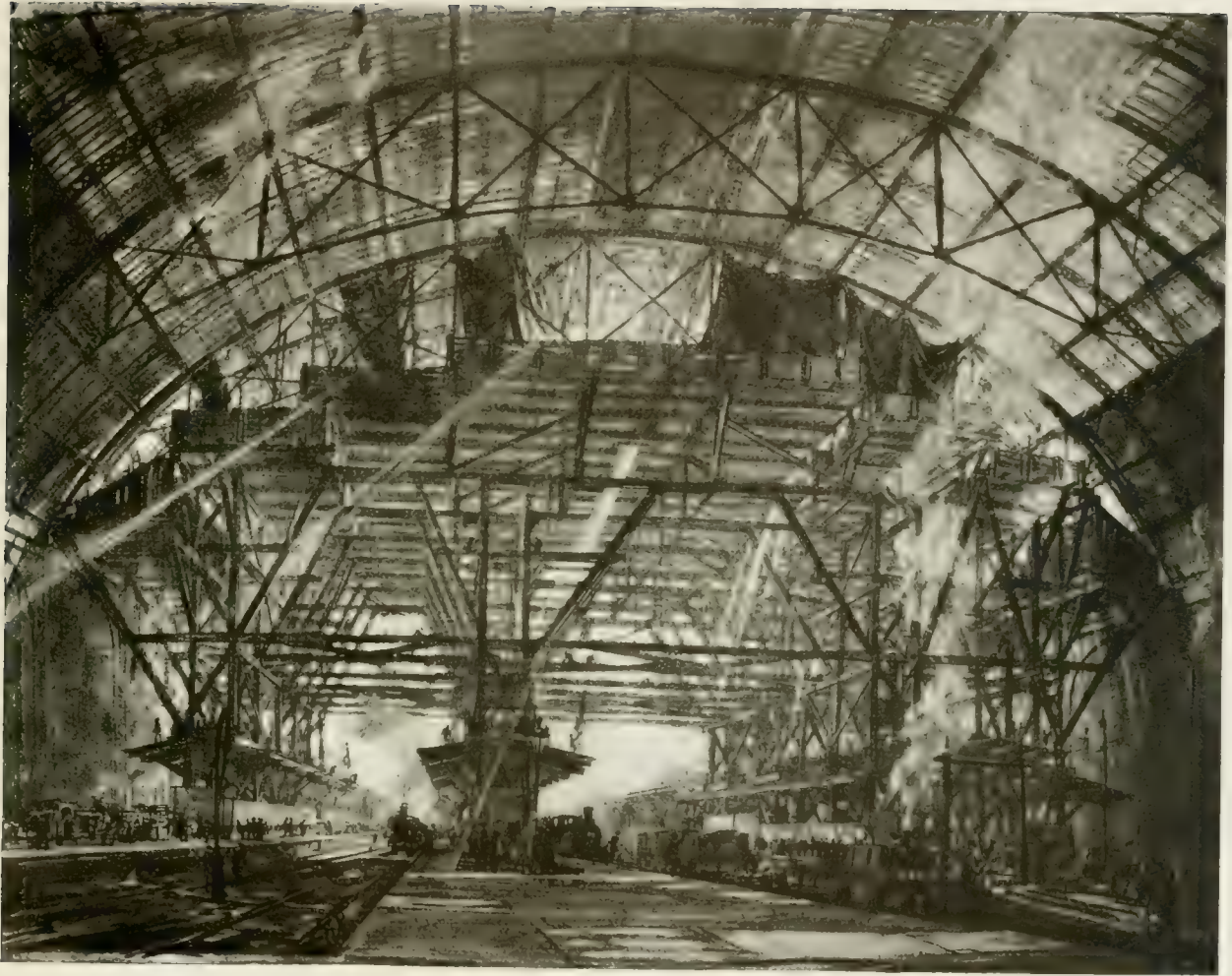
themselves—he addressed himself to translate them into a form which could be reproduced more faithfully, and so dealt, dully enough upon the whole, with the comparatively intractable material of pen and ink.

Of the Etchings and Dry-points—dry-points in by far the greater number of cases—Mr Campbell Dodgson has catalogued more than two hundred, and these do not include the pieces—not a few of them exquisite ones—done since Mr Campbell Dodgson's careful and serviceable volume entered the last stage of its preparation. They extend but to the early Winter of 1907, and since then Muirhead Bone has executed that summing-up of Sussex coast life which, since it is a quintessence of the South Coast's characteristics, is described as "The South Coast," and not as a particular place ; and, amongst the rest, that "Liberty's Clock," another compiled, selected vision, this time of a not quite real Soho—a something in which Scottish pertinacity, brought into play when Scottish skill had momentarily failed, found at last its reward. And here I may remark that when Mr Bone has made a second plate of a subject, or has worked upon one plate to such a degree that its earlier appearance has vanished, it must not be thought that the change or the elaboration or the fresh venture has been invariably improvement. It was improvement in "Liberty's Clock"—that is not to be questioned. It was

not improvement in the equally recent "Stirling," whose earlier and less laboured condition is the one that is desirable. The piece is then masterly, massive, simple, economical of effort; the thing done once and done well. And it was not really improvement in "The Great Gantry," whose finished and generally issued impressions were inferior in effect to what were actually but three or four trial proofs. "The Great Gantry" in any state gives evidence of wonderful draughtsmanship, but I know of nothing after the trial proofs in which much of what was seemingly spontaneity has not gone.

Here, too, I should say, that with regard to a great deal of Mr Bone's dry-point work, the delicate observer will find himself not necessarily pleased with every impression that is presented. And when the edition of a new plate is issued, he may, if he be enthusiastic, enterprising, and *matutinal*, call upon Messrs Obach "in their baths" — if the expression be allowed me — rather than, through the prompt distribution of the prints, find himself without opportunity for comparison and choice. I know I have myself worried Mr Max Morris, if not Mr Mayer, at inconceivable hours of the morning; and the only times when I have not been glad to see Dr Edward Tait and Mr Rinder have been when these amateurs have arrived before me. It is not suggested in the remarks just made that

any impressions of Mr Bone's dry-points are actually bad. Mr Campbell Dodgson has published the opinion that they are fairly equal. They may be fairly equal; careful retouch having made sound again what at least threatened to be faulty. My point is that they are often extremely dissimilar. And a collector's concern about this matter is a proof of interest; it is a tribute much more expressive than inappropriate eulogy.



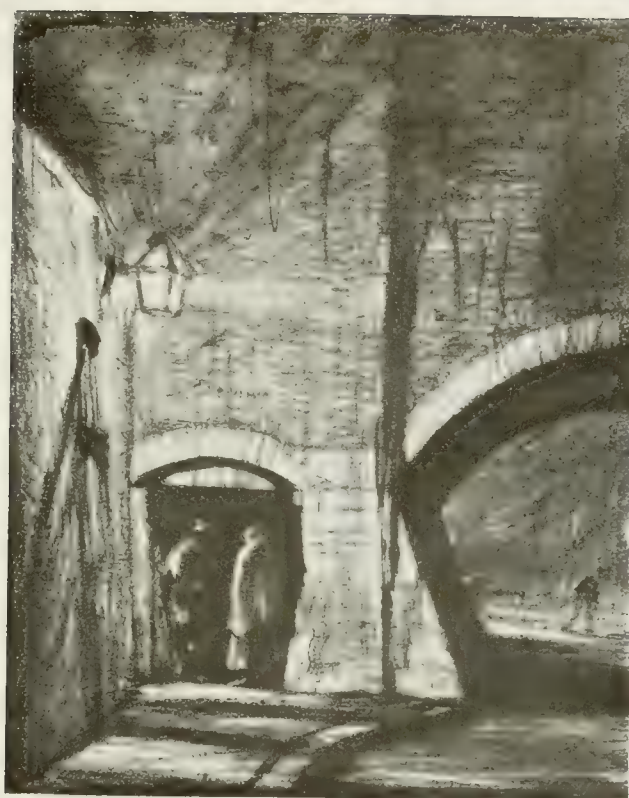
THE GREAT GANTRY: CHARING CROSS STATION,
1906 (*Drawing*)
By Muirhead Bone,
(*British Museum*.)



RATHBONE PLACE (*Drawing*)
By Muirhead Bone.
In the possession of
Dr Edward S. Tait.



STAFORD (*Drawing*)
By Muirhead Bone.



THE SARDINIAN EMBASSY (*Drawing*)
By Muirhead Bone.



FANSDOWNE HOUSE GARDEN (*Drawn*.)
By Muirhead Bone.



CLARE MARKET (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.



LEEDS WAREHOUSES (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.



THE STRAND (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.



SOUTH COAST (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.



LIBERTY'S CLOCK (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.



BUILDING (*Dry Point*)
By Muirhead Bone.

William Orpen

WILLIAM ORPEN

IF the examples of the work of Orpen which have been most lately shown, and without doubt most lately painted—the Portrait group with Mr Wilson Steer, Mr George Moore, Sir Hugh Lane, Mr Tonks, Mr Sickert, and another, and “The Dead Ptarmigan”—may be taken as indicative of methods now definitely adopted, it would appear that an artist yet absolutely young—for Mr Orpen is but thirty—has passed already from a handling scrupulously accurate, finished, and, if dainty, at least relatively dry, to a handling not less accurate indeed, but in a full measure free and rich and broad. Scarcely ten years is it, since, in one of the last of its Egyptian Hall Exhibitions, the New English Art Club displayed a little interior (“The Mirror”), the excellence of which, on its own then unfashionable lines, did not escape the acumen of Mr Croal Thomson, who very promptly possessed himself of the ingenious canvas. And since then the art of Mr William Orpen, and Mr Orpen’s success, has known change, but never pause or arrest. It was in 1901 that

“A Mere Fracture”—which remains not the least notable of Orpen’s excursions into Genre — was presented to the gaze of the public. It asserted definite kinship to not a few Wilkies of the early time—to say nothing of a remoter connection with Mulready and Webster.

But I do not know why I have spoken of Mr Orpen’s Genre painting as of the nature of an excursion ; for “A Mere Fracture,” with its suffering patient, its skilled young surgeon absorbed in his task, and that solicitous sister of the now incapacitated youth who stands as living illustration to the tritest lines in all the verses of Sir Walter Scott—is rather typical than exceptional in this painter’s work ; and the truth is, the realm of Genre has not so much been subjected by him to raid, or to a series of raids, as firmly occupied, substantially possessed. Not every piece of Orpen’s which attests this occupation is concerned with an incident so definite ; but the spirit of Genre is in this painter’s canvases, even when its form is less recognisable. The Portraiture of Orpen, unless indeed in such a *portrait d’apparat* as that of a late Lord Justice of Appeal—Sir James Stirling—itself partakes of Genre ; for, while by no means losing sight of the character it is its aim and business to portray, it sets its person of the human drama in surroundings characteristic and abundant. An interior is

represented, as well as a personality ; there is the suggestion of the background of a life. Sir Arthur Birch, in his sanctum in Burlington Gardens—one of the lofty rooms which the art of Orpen, as that of Nicholson, affects : Orpen must first have been familiar with them in the now effaced grandeur of Fitzroy Square—Sir Arthur Birch, at his writing-table, has, like the Bank of England itself that there he personifies, a Yesterday and a To-morrow as well as a To-day. And Life, too, his habits of life—not only features and a head—is suggested, not alone by the attitude of Mr Percy Wyndham, but by the quarters in which he is ensconced and at home. And, yet more lately, is it not?—and whatever be its exaggerations, whatever its defects—the portrait group called “A Bloomsbury Family” (for it is thus that it has pleased Mr Orpen to dub the canvas in which is chronicled an entirely individual artist—William Nicholson—and his wife and their children) seizes no merely external aspect of those with whom it is concerned, but writes for us some entertaining since well observed pages of domestic history. And, if we can imagine them without value as portraits, and trace upon the canvas in which they occur, no thought of repeating for a later generation Fantin’s “Hommage à Delacroix” or his “Atelier aux Batignolles,” those grouped heads in a picture wherein we see Mr Steer

as an attentive listener, while Mr George Moore ardently reads a manuscript—is it *The Lovers of Oreley*?—would yet have interest as a Genre-piece. Again, if there is nothing of Genre but just that note of happy intimacy which belongs to it, which is a part of its charm, the portrait of “Grace Orpen” is in that one way connected with the achievements in Genre and conversation - pieces by the painters whom Mr Orpen has set himself to emulate — never to imitate. And this portrait of the painter’s wife has, even in greater measure than most of his other portraits, the virtue of vitality—to look upon it is to come suddenly in contact with a living and a moving, and, as it happens, a delightful presence.

An Irishman, educated first, and very early, in his particular art in the Art School of Dublin—then transferring himself, in the last of the 'Nineties, I believe, to the Slade School in London, where there must be accorded to Mr Henry Tonks the credit of having much assisted his development—Orpen has shown, during those last ten years, variety of aim and flexibility of means. But never so various has been his outlook and endeavour as to have permitted him to quit, even in thought, the safe land of actual experience and of actual vision. I know no instance of his Landscape, though Landscape there well may be. I cannot suspect the existence by him of pictures statedly

“religious,” or of any pictures of the kind deemed “historical” only by reason of the circumstance that the history they travesty is a history their painters have never seen in the making.

But two manifestations of William Orpen’s Art ought to be mentioned even in an estimate of necessity superficial and temporary. One of them is that made by his drawings—his drawings of figures single or related. Colourless deliberately, deliberately airless—a little light and shadow, and the strict contour: nothing else—they show him, more clearly than it is within the province of any other order of his work to show him, a draughtsman almost consummate of the face and form. Rich in these flying sheets is the suggestion, and faultless the record.

And then there is that other evidence of William Orpen’s skill which is thus far afforded only, it may be, by the one great Nude that is known to me as from his brush; and that is the “Recumbent Figure” (the illustration is at hand) which comes to us a thing of flesh and blood indeed, charged with its suggestion of all but immediate movement—a modern adaptation, one would say, of the thought or the conception which was the origin of those most potent nudities of Rembrandt in which are presented the veritable portraits of that not formally comely, but youngish, healthy, very sympathetic

personality, Hendrickje Stoffels, who was the guardian of the Master's later fortunes and the consoler of his troubled age.



A MERE FRACTURE
By William Orpen.
*In the possession of
Captain G. S. C. Swinton.*



GRACE ORPEN
By William Orpen.
In the possession of
Alfred A. de Pass, Esq.



A PORTRAIT GROUP
By William Orpen.
(*In Progress.*)



THE HON. PERCY WYNDHAM
By William Orpen.



RECUMBENT FIGURE
By William Orpen.
*In the possession of
S. Wilson, Esq.*



THE DEAD PTARMIGAN
By William Orpen.

WORKS BY FREDERICK WEDMORE

On Books and Arts (" Lyrical Ballads "—Balzac—Anne Oldfield—Siddons and Rachel—Joseph Jefferson—Irving—Dutch Drawings—Velazquez—Chardin—Moreau le jeune). 6s. net.

Whistler and Others. 6s. net.

" Mr Wedmore is the recognised authority on Whistler."—*The Times*.

" He handles debatable questions with good taste, and the book everywhere reveals knowledge and thought."—*Scotsman*.

" The appeal of the book is wide, and from the first page to the last it offers an invitation to think."—*Standard*.

" It scatters subtle criticism, voiced in brilliant phrase."—*Glasgow Herald*.

Pastorals of France. Fourth Edition. 3s. 6d. net.

" In their simplicity, their tenderness, their quietude, their truthfulness, ' Pastorals of France ' are almost perfect."—*Spectator*.

Renunciations. Third Edition. With Portrait by J. J. Shannon, R.A. 3s. 6d. net.

" Mr Wedmore has gained for himself an enviable reputation. ' The Chemist in the Suburbs,' in ' Renunciations,' is his masterpiece."—*Saturday Review*.

English Episodes. Second Edition. 3s. 6d. net.

" A penetrating insight, a fine pathos. . . . Mr Wedmore is a carefully deliberate artist."—*Westminster Gazette*.

Orgéas and Miradou : Dream of Provence. 1s. net.

" The beautiful story of ' Orgéas and Miradou ' is typical of Mr Wedmore's power of expressing the poignancy of human emotion. It is charged with depth of feeling, and is vivid in its extreme reticence. In ' Orgéas and Miradou ' there is nothing short of divination."—*Athenæum*.

The Collapse of the Penitent. Second Edition. 3s. 6d. net.

" There is no denying the artist in Mr Wedmore. He has the vision, and he can interpret. His characters throb and move for us in the act of life. To call this book ' clever ' would be altogether to underrate it."—*The Times*.

Size, Large Quarto (13 by 10 inches.)

Monthly 1s. 6d. net.

Volume 21s. net, bound in cloth, gilt edges.

THE ART JOURNAL

(Issued continuously once a month since 1839)

AT no period of an unparalleled career have expressions of satisfaction been so spirited as during recent years. *The Art Journal* is an important and widely-read review, with high ideals and traditions and unflagging enterprise. It keeps Art-loving people in touch with the events of the day, and stimulates the thoughts of the artist and craftsman.

The illustrations, which are profuse, are specially attractive, and in quality rare. Many of them are prepared exclusively for this publication. The articles are by distinguished and best-informed writers, and are of great interest.

MONOGRAPHS

THIRTY-FOUR Standard Biographies of modern artists have been issued from the office of *The Art Journal*. The subject of the most recent monograph is "J. W. Waterhouse, R.A.": the book contains about 50 illustrations, including a hand-printed etching and four plates in colours.

CATALOGUE

THE "Red Catalogue," 1909 (illustrated), contains a list of Books for study and presentation, and Prints suitable for framing. A copy will be sent on application.

LONDON

VIRTUE & CO., 7 CITY GARDEN ROW, CITY ROAD

PRINTED AT THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET.

University of British Columbia Library

DUE DATE

15 MAR 1973

MAR 15 RECD

FORM 310

